

She Who Became My Guru



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Introduction

In the soft hush of his Himalayan hill home, Ishaan Sharma—now 52—sat by a sun-warmed window with a cup of tea and an old wooden bookstand. Before him lay a story not just authored, but lived. The wind outside rustled like turning pages, and so he began again—revisiting the words that had once poured from his spirit like spring water from ancient stone.

There are books that aim to teach. There are books that aim to impress. But this one—this book—was never meant to do either.

She Who Became My Guru is not a tale of perfection, but of profound imperfection lovingly transformed. It is the story of a seeker who was never seeking, of a man who stumbled into the divine by tripping over the ordinary—of a journey that began with heartbreak, confusion, and a taste of love too potent to be labeled romantic.

Born under the quiet shadows of the Himalayan hills, Ishaan lived what many would call a normal life. A part teacher, a veterinarian, a husband, a son, a friend. But behind the curtain of roles and rituals, something ancient stirred—a whisper of something eternal, a beckoning he could neither ignore nor explain. And then she entered. Not as a woman alone, but as the mirror that turned his gaze inward. Myra. The one who shattered his illusions not by force, but simply by being. The one whose absence awakened the presence within.

In these pages, the reader won't find a straight road to enlightenment—for the soul never travels in straight lines. Instead, there are winding paths through science and mythology, laughter among school friends, and silences between lovers. Glimpses of the moon. Echoes of forgotten lifetimes. And at the center, a man who writes not as a master, but as one who was loved into awakening—who still forgets, stumbles, rises, and remembers.

Each chapter is both a memory and a meditation. Rooted in the soil of Ishaan's lived experience, watered by mystic insight, and grown under the moonlight of inner inquiry. The teachings are not his. They unfolded like petals from the heart of life itself. He merely bled them onto these pages, as one does when the wound becomes the womb of wisdom.

This book is not an instruction—it is a remembrance. Not a sermon, but a soft echo from within. A song, a prayer, a bridge—for anyone who has ever whispered to the sky, “Is there more than this?”

Yes, there is.

And it begins not above, not beyond, but within.

Welcome to *She Who Became My Guru*. May you find in it not answers, but your own reflection.

Chapter 1: The Boy from the Quiet Hills

In the cradle of the lower Himalayas, where clouds brushed treetops like old friends and time slowed to the rhythm of rustling pine needles, there lived a boy named Ishaan. His village—silent, scattered, and serene—seemed etched more in spirit than in stone. It was a place where the morning mist carried the dreams of its people, and the twilight melted into tales told by flickering hearths.

Ishaan was a child of that hush. To the world, he was quiet—almost invisible—wandering through school corridors with the stillness of snowfall. Teachers marked his presence; classmates overlooked it. Yet, beneath that silence breathed a spirit wide awake.

At home, Ishaan transformed. He spoke with candor and a flicker in his eyes, revealing the poetry of a mind that saw beyond what was seen. His mother often said that his silences weren't empty—they were full, like the sky before rain. To his siblings, he was a storyteller, a mimic, a thinker who asked why the stars trembled and where dreams went after waking. But in public, words betrayed him. They halted on his tongue, unsure, unready, often unspoken.

He had just passed his matric exams from the modest village school—a single-story building shaded by deodars and discipline. His marks, quietly earned and quietly celebrated, opened a new door. His father, a stern yet sensitive man of the soil, decided it was time Ishaan stepped out of the cradle. A senior secondary school awaited in the town across two rivers and one dusty highway—a place that promised better education and, perhaps unknowingly, solitude of a different kind.

As they packed his modest belongings—a steel trunk, a water flask, a photo of Lord Shiva, and the tight hugs of a home—something shifted. Ishaan was leaving not just geography behind, but the language of comfort and known patterns. His village was more than a place; it was a rhythm he had memorized. Now, it would become memory.

The morning of his departure, the hills stood still, as if listening. His mother's silence was heavier than her tears. His younger brother clung to his kurta. His father said little—just a firm nod, a pat on the back, and a gaze that meant everything. Ishaan sat on the rickety bus, watching the pines retreat like waving elders.

That bus ride was the first chapter of an inward journey—one that wouldn't just carry him to a school, but toward a self still forming, still hiding. He felt a strange loss—not of people or places—but of something nameless, a quiet certainty that used to live within him. The fields grew flatter, the air warmer, and the silence inside him louder.

There's a peculiar loneliness in growing. Not the loneliness of absence, but of shedding. As the bus wound down the mountains, Ishaan felt he was not simply going somewhere—he was being unmade, so he could be made again.

That was the first lesson the hills taught him:

You don't grow by adding; you grow by leaving.

And so began his life beyond the quiet hills. He didn't yet know that the roads he took would soon bend into strange meetings, that the stillness in him would find an echo in someone unexpected—a presence that would awaken, guide, and undo him in ways no school ever could.

But that is for another time. For now, Ishaan sat in silence, a boy uprooted, gazing at a world he didn't yet belong to, unaware that he was already on the path—not just to knowledge, but to a silent revolution within.

Chapter 2: A School in the Arms of Discipline

The scent of resinous pine hung softly in the air, like the memory of something sacred.

As Ishaan stepped down from the last rickety bus that had brought him up the winding roads from the comfort of home, a silence greeted him—one that wasn't empty, but full. It was as if the mountains themselves were holding their breath. The sunlight filtered through tall deodars, dappling the gravel path like blessings from the sky. His city-worn shoes crunched over dry needles and hidden pebbles, but even that sound felt respectful here, hushed by nature's quiet grandeur.

He paused. His gaze wandered to the fluttering prayer flags strung between two oaks—tired from the wind, but still dancing. Somewhere nearby, a bird sang just once, then flew off, its wings slicing the silence like a whisper.

This was not the city. Not even close.

Not the crowded school he had tried earlier in Chandigarh even though for a very brief period—a place full of vehicles, vending machines, and voices louder than thoughts. That city school had promised everything—facilities, computers, science labs, even a swimming pool—but the noise! The endless, soul-numbing hum of engines, gossip, mobile phones, and ambition. There, no one really studied. They competed. No one really listened. They just waited for their turn to speak. Ishaan's heart, already too soft for that world, had shrunk into itself like a turtle under threat.

This, however, was different. That's why the mountains, his inborn mates, were calling him back once again—away from the hustle of the city.

Here, amidst the thick woods of Himachal Pradesh, was a modest civilian school nestled within a cantonment area—a strange blend of order and calm. Though the buildings wore no army badge, the air carried discipline, a certain stillness of routines long practiced. The cantonment itself was mostly civilian now, with shops and households run by locals, but the army's subtle influence hung in the backdrop like a prayer woven into the air—never loud, never pushy, just present.

Even the wind seemed to move with purpose.

He approached the school gate, where two children—perhaps from the senior classes—stood chatting softly, their uniforms neat and their postures straight. One of them looked at Ishaan and gave a small, sincere smile. Not the polished, indifferent half-smile of city kids, but something more human.

"Ishaan Sharma?" a voice called from the porch.

He turned. A teacher, tall and lean, with streaks of silver in his hair and eyes that had clearly seen more than textbooks, stepped down the stairs and offered a hand. "Welcome to Pine Crest School."

Pine Crest.

Even the name carried dew.

As Ishaan walked beside him toward the main building, he noticed everything—the prayer flags near the flagpole, the scent of turmeric wafting from the kitchen, the rhythmic chirping of crickets from somewhere behind the library. No noise. No rush.

For the first time in many weeks, his heartbeat matched the rhythm of his steps

A Different Kind of Routine

The days that followed were unlike anything he had imagined. Here, students stood up when teachers entered not out of fear, but habit. The morning assembly wasn't a chore—it was an invocation. Each student spoke something—a quote, a poem, a prayer—not to impress, but to share. And the teachers, though firm, seemed like mountain guides—always watching, but never pushing too hard.

The classrooms were modest—no smartboards, no plush seating—but what they had was attention. Focus. A kind of warmth that even broken desks couldn't hide. Ishaan would often catch himself staring at the window during lectures, only to realise that the lessons were somehow seeping in even as he drifted. It was as though the very air here whispered equations and metaphors.

One day, during recess, a curious boy named Gagan plopped down next to him with a lunchbox full of pickled lingdu and chapatis.

"You're the city guy?" he asked, mouth already full.

"I was," Ishaan smiled. "Now I'm here."

Gagan squinted like a monk considering a riddle. "You'll stay. People like you always stay."

"Why?"

"Because you look like you came searching for something."

That line stayed with him longer than the taste of wild fern pickle.

The Silent Guru

The school had no formal guru. But in the silence between lectures, during the morning PT runs under foggy skies, or while sitting alone on the sun-warmed steps of the old temple behind the school, Ishaan found teachings more profound than words could ever deliver.

Once, during a class on moral science—a subject often laughed off elsewhere—the teacher, Mr.Dutt, placed a pebble on the table.

"What is this?" he asked.

"A stone," someone replied.

"A weapon," said another, giggling.

Mr.Dutt smiled. "Yes. But it is also a reminder. This came from a river nearby. Rolled, shaped, softened over decades. Like you. Life will toss you, polish you, bruise you—but if you allow it, it'll shape you. Into what? That's your choice."

Something stirred in Ishaan's heart.

He had thought transformation was loud, like lightning splitting the sky. But here, it arrived on little feet. Quiet. Patient.

That evening, he wrote in his journal—a habit he had picked up from the school's curious emphasis on self-reflection:

> "I thought I needed a guru in saffron robes, speaking mantras. But maybe the pine trees are my gurus. Maybe the wind that wakes me up is. Maybe I am."

Whispers in the Forest

There was a trail behind the hostel—a winding path that led to an abandoned British-era stone bungalow half-swallowed by moss. Rumor had it a saint once lived there. Some said it was haunted. Others said it was blessed. Naturally, the boys were forbidden to go.

Naturally, Ishaan went.

One misty Sunday morning, he followed the deer-trodden trail alone. With each step, the air thickened—not with fear, but with a kind of electric stillness. The kind you feel before a revelation. Or a memory.

The bungalow appeared like a forgotten temple, cradled in vines and secrets. He stepped inside. Dust motes floated like souls in sunlight. There were no ghosts, but in the silence, he heard something deeper.

His own breath.

His own heartbeat.

And then—nothing.

A strange emptiness bloomed inside, and for a fleeting second, he felt his "I" dissolve. No name, no class, no boy from the hills—just an awareness. Expansive. Eternal. Not frightening, but freeing. Like falling into the sky and finding it soft.

Then a bird chirped.

And the moment passed.

But it had happened. He couldn't un-feel it.

The Awakening

Back at school, things seemed the same—but something inside had changed.

When he looked at classmates, he saw not competition, but stories. When teachers scolded him, he didn't shrink—he listened. When the school's peon, old Lalaji, limped across the corridor, Ishaan no longer ignored him. He offered a hand. And a smile.

"Something's different about you," Gagan remarked one evening.

"I think I'm just... beginning to notice things."

Gagan nodded. "That's how it starts. Before you know it, you start noticing yourself."

Epilogue to a Beginning

Months passed.

Winter arrived with silence painted in snow. The mountains donned white robes like saints meditating in plain sight. The school felt warmer somehow. Perhaps because Ishaan had stopped looking for warmth outside.

He had come to escape the city. He had stayed because this place—this school wrapped in deodars, shadowed by army boots but sung into silence by birds—had taught him what no classroom ever could:

That discipline was not about rules, but rhythm.

That spirituality didn't always wear beads—it sometimes wore sweaters and read geography.

And that the first guru... often waits quietly... until the student becomes silent enough to hear.

Chapter 3: Her Entrance: Myra

The pines stood still, like ancient witnesses, swaying gently in the cold morning breeze, as if whispering secrets only the mountains knew. Ishaan Sharma, with his satchel slung over one shoulder, walked silently towards the classroom, his shoes crunching faintly over fallen needles and pebbles. The calm rhythm of his new life in the cantonment-flavored school in Himachal Pradesh had begun to settle in like snow on a quiet ledge. It was peaceful—almost too peaceful. But

somewhere in his heart, a strange anticipation pulsed. Something—or someone—was about to change everything.

The school, though civilian in name, bore the discipline of the army around it. A blend of civilian institutions nestled in an area that otherwise echoed with the boots of patrolling soldiers. Yet, even amidst such order, Ishaan had started finding his rhythm. The mess food had become more edible, the library more welcoming, and his bunked evenings beneath pine trees had started feeling like silent conversations with the cosmos. After the chaos of a city school he'd briefly tried—loud, impersonal, and utterly devoid of true learning—this haven amidst Himachal's misted slopes felt like a calling answered.

That morning, he was early. His usual spot on the third bench near the window offered a perfect view of the hills beyond—hills that reminded him of his village, his parents, and the way the wind used to carry the scent of rain before it fell. He took a deep breath, as if drawing strength from that distant memory.

And then, like a quiet thunderclap in the midst of his silent sanctuary, **she walked in**.

Myra.

Her entrance wasn't grand. There was no gust of wind, no celestial spotlight, no dramatic background music. Just a girl with curious eyes, hair tied in a lazy braid, and a smile that wasn't trying to impress anyone. She walked into the room as if she belonged there—not in the arrogant way some do, but like a song finding its chorus.

She glanced around the room and, strangely, her eyes landed on Ishaan—as if drawn not by accident, but by some quiet gravity. He looked away instinctively, but the moment lingered, suspended like dew on a leaf just before it falls.

They didn't speak that day.

The next day, she was back, this time seated two rows behind him. Ishaan, out of habit, listened more than he spoke. But Myra had a different rhythm altogether. During the short breaks between lectures, she would hum to herself or scribble in a notebook filled with doodles and notes. There was something oddly comforting in her presence, like the way certain dreams stay with you long after you've woken up.

Then came the announcement.

A regional quiz competition. The topic: Child Care and Family Planning.

That afternoon, Myra approached Ishaan as the class was dispersing.

"Hey... Ishaan, right?"

He turned. "Yes?"

"Would you have any good material to prepare for the quiz? I mean, I don't want to go in blind."

He paused, then nodded slowly. "Actually... I have a book. It's from my uncle's collection—he's a medical practitioner. It covers family planning and child care quite thoroughly. Some diagrams too. I can bring it tomorrow."

Her face lit up. "That would be perfect! Thanks!"

He gave it to her the next day, neatly wrapped in an old newspaper. Myra took it with a quiet smile, her fingers brushing against his. Something passed between them—silent, unformed.

The book was slightly clinical, rich with factual knowledge, diagrams, and medical insights. Ishaan had hesitated for a moment before deciding to hand it over. But since Myra had asked for it herself, a part of him felt unburdened—free from the guilt of handing a girl something so... straightforward. Perhaps even too straightforward.

She returned the book two or three days later. There was a lightness in her step, and yet, a shade of bashfulness touched her cheeks. She looked away while handing it back, but a faint happiness shimmered in her eyes.

"Very helpful," she mumbled. "Thank you... and for being so... open."

Ishaan simply nodded, heart quietly racing. A strange comfort had grown between them—born not of sweet nothings but of shared learning and silent honesty.

On the day of the quiz, rain clouds loomed like curious spectators. As they stood outside the assembly hall waiting for their turn, Myra turned to him and whispered, "Nervous?"

He shook his head. "No. With you, I'm calm."

She laughed gently. "Good. Because I'm a nervous wreck. If I mess up, just smile at the judges. You have that mountain-boy innocence. It works."

He smiled. "And if I mess up?"

She thought for a second. "Then I'll cover up with my city-girl overconfidence. We're balanced."

The quiz was intense, yet their preparation showed. Ishaan's factual clarity blended with Myra's confident articulation. They handled complex questions on contraception methods, child nutrition, family welfare schemes, and infant care. A few spectator students later commented that Ishaan seemed emotionally stirred when Myra spoke—as if her voice awakened something deeper in him.

After that day, the invisible current between them deepened. They never talked directly and separately—only among classmates—but something had already begun taking root.

In shared glances, in accidental smiles, in the casual way Myra mentioned his name during group discussions, something beautiful stirred. Neither confessed, neither chased.

But the mountain breeze knew. So did the pines.

And perhaps, so did their souls.

She had unknowingly become his mirror, his muse, and perhaps even the flicker of something sacred. There was a mystic current beneath their

connection, as though their souls had once circled each other in a different lifetime, now reunited in these hills.

And Ishaan, who once spoke only to mountains, had begun to speak with his heart.

What he didn't know then was that Myra's presence in his life wasn't just to offer companionship or inspiration. She had come to awaken something far more profound. She would become the very spark that lit his path—not just through exams or classrooms, but through the winding, sacred journey of the self.

He didn't know it yet.

But she would become his Guru.

And this—this was just the beginning.

Chapter 4: Pages and Perceptions

The mist lingered low over the hills that morning, weaving like a soft shawl draped across the slopes. Ishaan sat beneath the deodar tree, his fingers tracing idle patterns into the moist earth, while thoughts of Myra shimmered through his mind like sunlight dancing on still water. Something had changed after the quiz—their quiet camaraderie now hummed with a subtle intensity neither of them fully understood, but both deeply felt.

It was not in grand gestures or spoken promises. It was in the way her name lingered on his lips even when unspoken. In the way his heart beat just a touch faster when he spotted her from across the corridor. Myra had stepped into his life not like a storm, but like a soft poem read under candlelight—each line revealing more than the last.

He recalled clearly the day she first approached him for help. It wasn't just the request for a book; it was the way she'd asked. Direct, but with a hint of curiosity that seemed to reach beyond the surface. The quiz topic had surprised many—Child Care and Family Planning—a mature subject, loaded with societal perceptions and silent hesitations. But Myra had asked for reading material without the slightest giggle or awkwardness. Ishaan had admired that.

What he didn't admit to anyone, not even himself at the time, was how heavily he'd hesitated before deciding to lend her the book. It wasn't a textbook from their syllabus—it was from his uncle's private collection, a well-thumbed medical volume, factual but unflinching. It spoke candidly of biology, reproduction, contraception—terms that still made classmates squirm in discomfort.

But she had asked. And he could not deny her.

When he had handed it to her the next day, carefully wrapped in newspaper to preserve both dignity and discretion, he noticed how her eyes searched his face—not for approval or attraction, but perhaps for understanding. He offered none. Just a nod, and a simple sentence: "It's straightforward. But helpful."

She had taken it, her fingers brushing his, the touch brief but electrifying. For the next two days, Ishaan avoided thinking too deeply about it. Until she returned the book.

There was a hesitation in her movement, the way she held it between both hands like it was something sacred yet fragile. A flicker of embarrassment danced across her face, but her smile outshone it.

"Very helpful," she had said softly, eyes not quite meeting his. "Thank you... and for being so... open."

It wasn't just the gratitude that touched him, but the honesty behind it. That simple exchange had stripped away the superficial awkwardness often surrounding such subjects. Myra hadn't laughed. She hadn't mocked. Instead, she had returned it with respect, appreciation, and something unspoken.

From that point on, the air between them shimmered with unsaid things.

The day of the quiz had been one of nervous anticipation. And this time, it wasn't fate or faculty that paired them together—Myra had asked Ishaan to participate with her. It was a quiet invitation, shared under the tree between classes.

"I want you with me," she'd said, almost casually, but her eyes revealed the sincerity behind the offer.

There were only two boys among five girls in the medical session, so the competition for a female partner was not intense. In fact, Myra's friends had taken note of her growing closeness with Ishaan—and not all of them were pleased. A few tried to dissuade her subtly, drawing her attention away, placing gentle wedges between their growing bond. Even Anjali, one of her friends pretended to show love and care for Ishaan, just to draw him away from her and closer to herself by pointing out how much more affection he was showing. Envy has its own ways of dressing in friendly concern.

But Ishaan had sensed the truth. Beneath the smiles, the shared laughter, he could hear the deeper call. Myra wasn't just choosing him for his academic grasp—she was choosing him for something more instinctual, more spiritual. And that was all he needed to know.

Ishaan's calm presence and sharp knowledge complemented Myra's eloquence and poise. Together, they were a force of quiet brilliance.

During the segment on child development, when Myra spoke about the psychological importance of early parental bonding, Ishaan couldn't help but notice the way a hush fell over the room. Her voice carried both intelligence and care. She wasn't reciting answers—she was speaking truth.

Later, one of their classmates whispered to Ishaan, "Bro, you looked like you were going to cry when she answered that question. You okay?"

He had laughed it off, but in truth, something had stirred within him. Not just admiration—but reverence.

Now, sitting beneath that deodar, those moments replayed in his mind. The quiz was over. Their names had been announced among the top scorers. But the event had done something more than just bring accolades. It had opened a new page in the quiet book of their shared story.

They still hadn't spoken alone since. Conversations remained nestled within the comfort of the group—safe, public, undefined. Yet, each shared glance felt like a verse in an ancient poem only they could read.

Sometimes, Ishaan would catch her watching him when she thought he wasn't looking. And sometimes, their eyes would meet across the classroom, and something ancient would stir—something older than their lives, something deeper than teenage affection.

One afternoon, as they sat with friends discussing the quiz, the topic drifted to the book.

"Ishaan gave me the weirdest book," Myra said casually, but there was a twinkle in her eyes.

"Weird?" he asked.

"Weirdly... honest."

A chuckle went around. Someone added, "Bro, bold move giving that to a girl."

Ishaan shrugged. "She asked."

Myra smiled. "And I respect that he didn't sugarcoat knowledge. Truth shouldn't be hidden in silence."

That moment etched itself into Ishaan's soul. In her, he saw the fearlessness of a seeker. Someone who valued truth over comfort. Someone who could laugh at herself but never at the sacred.

That night, Ishaan lay on his cot, eyes open to the ceiling. The quiet murmur of pine needles brushing against his window felt like whispers from a wiser world.

He thought of Myra—not as a girl, not as a crush, but as a reflection. She hadn't just stepped into his world—she had cracked it open.

He remembered something his grandfather once told him during a village evening under the stars: "When your soul's longing takes form, she may appear not as a goddess, but as a friend. Or a stranger. Or even a classmate. But you'll know her—not by her words, but by what her silence awakens in you."

That's what Myra had become.

Not merely a girl with curious eyes and a confident smile. But a mirror that reflected his truest yearning—to learn, to grow, to awaken.

Perhaps that was why the subject of family planning, so taboo for many, had not felt inappropriate between them. It had felt... natural. Because they were seekers. Not of romance, not even of companionship—but of understanding. Of truth, no matter where it lay.

And Ishaan began to sense it—Myra was not here by chance.

She was not just a classmate.

She was his catalyst.

She would become his Guru.

And though their journey had barely begun, the first pages of perception had already turned.

Like ancient scriptures hidden in plain sight, waiting to be read.

As he drifted into sleep, he whispered a thought to the night wind:

"She who became my Guru... doesn't even know it yet."

The pines rustled softly.

Perhaps they did.

Chapter 5: A Spark Without Words

The final school bell had rung, and like a flock set free, the students poured out into the corridor, the air filling with laughter, chatter, and footsteps shuffling against the dusty tiles.

But Ishaan Sharma didn't rush. He never did.

He stood at the corner of the verandah, half hidden behind a pillar weathered by years of monsoons and sun, watching the world with that same quiet, curious stillness that had started to draw attention — especially Myra's.

Her friends were giggling as usual — Anjali in particular was animated, narrating something with wild hand gestures — but Myra was quieter today. Her glance, as fleeting as a breeze in spring, drifted to where Ishaan stood, head tilted slightly, eyes cast downward in thought.

They had never talked alone. Never walked together. Not even by accident.

And they never would.

Not here.

Not in this time.

Not in this place.

It was a different era in their little town — one where even walking in a pair of opposite genders was enough to become the centre of murmurs and raised eyebrows. A single touch — even an accidental brush of the hand — was enough to stir storms in conservative corners. Usually, the dress used to be decent and classical, with a traditional style of tying the hair. Although the subjects of study were purely science-oriented and modern, it was a good blend of tradition and modernity.

Myra, graceful and thoughtful, followed those boundaries as naturally as a river flowing within its banks. Not out of fear. But out of deep respect — for her family, her culture, her own sense of purity.

And Ishaan... Ishaan would never even imagine crossing those lines.

He barely spoke as it was.

If he ever did, it was only when asked something directly. His answers were short, sometimes just a nod, sometimes a quiet, "Hmm." He had no idea what love meant — not in the way others his age teased or whispered about it. But when Myra was near, something happened. Not to his body, but to his breath. To his soul.

One afternoon, while the students waited for their class teacher, Anjali joked loudly, nudging Myra, "Look at Ishaan — again! That stillness! Myra, I think he's about to open his Shiva's third eye!"

Everyone burst into laughter.

Myra laughed too, her tone light, but there was a twinkle in her eye that didn't match her laughter.

"Ishaan Sharma," she teased across the room, "Tell us — are you meditating or planning world salvation?"

He looked up, surprised by the attention. Then — as usual — looked away, the faintest blush warming his face.

He didn't answer. He didn't need to.

That silence of his had its own gravity.

The kind that made even jokes fall quiet after echoing too far.

Many boys stayed in the small hostel attached to the school — a faded, timeworn building behind the playground. It was noisy, cramped, and full of the usual pranks, midnight whispering, and the chaotic joys of teenage boys.

But Ishaan almost never stayed back.

Each day, after the last class, while most boys ran off to games or to the hostel mess, Ishaan would begin a long journey home — several kilometers on foot just to catch a rattling state bus, which took him further into the outskirts of town. And then again, he walked.

No one understood why he put himself through that daily ritual.

But for Ishaan, there was something waiting at home that no hostel comfort could match.

—

As the sun softened and shadows stretched long on the mud path, Ishaan would arrive at his modest home — a place that smelled of earth, incense, and old wisdom. Inside, seated cross-legged near the window that opened to the backyard peepal tree, his grandfather chanted from the **Puranas** — the **Shrimad Bhagavat**, the **Shiva Purana**, or sometimes, from the **Devi Bhagavatam**.

The words floated through the evening air like gentle fireflies.

“...And when Radha saw Krishna walking away with others, she smiled, not out of jealousy, but from love that knows freedom...”

Ishaan would stand silently at the door, schoolbag still on his shoulders, listening. His great-grandmother, old and blind, sat on a woven cot nearby, swaying gently, muttering the name of Hari under her breath with every bead of her rudraksha mala.

Those stories — soaked in devotion, layered with longing and surrender — were not fiction to him.

They were mirrors.

He could feel them echoing somewhere inside, in a space still unnamed.

—

It was on one such evening, while his grandfather spoke of Radha's love, that Ishaan found himself thinking of Myra.

Could that kind of love still exist?

The kind that waits, that watches, that never asks or takes or even speaks, but simply... is?

She had never once walked beside him. Never sat alone with him. Never touched his hand. And yet, somehow, he felt as if she lived in his breath now. Not as an obsession, but as a presence — gentle, sacred, untouchable.

Like the flute music only Radha could hear.

—

One day, during a group assignment, Myra turned to him suddenly and said, "You always listen like you're not just hearing me, but... remembering me."

Her voice was half-teasing, half-vulnerable.

Ishaan blinked. "Maybe I am," he replied without thinking.

The group laughed.

Myra paused. Her smile faded just a little — replaced by something softer.

They returned to their books, but the air between them had changed.

A string had been plucked.

—

The school had announced a visit to a nearby heritage temple — an old Shiva shrine atop a small hill, as part of an educational outing. The excitement was palpable. But Myra, even here, chose to remain in the company of her close-knit circle of girls. Even during the bus ride, she sat with Anjali, keeping the invisible lines of decorum intact.

Ishaan sat near the back, watching the green hills pass by, the wind tousling his hair.

At the temple, students scattered in groups, climbing the stone steps, marvelling at the ancient architecture, clicking pictures with shaky school cameras.

Ishaan drifted towards the rear courtyard of the temple — drawn to the silent banyan tree whose roots kissed the stones below.

A breeze blew. A cowbell chimed. And from the temple's sanctum, a faint *Om NamahShivaya* floated outward.

He sat beneath the banyan, closing his eyes. Not to meditate. Just to *be*.

—

A few minutes later, soft footsteps approached.

It was Myra.

She didn't sit beside him. But she stood nearby, her hands folded, eyes on the leaves swaying above.

"You feel different," she said suddenly.

He opened his eyes.

"In what way?" he asked.

"Like someone who doesn't belong entirely to this age."

Ishaan gave a faint smile. "Maybe I read too many stories."

She shook her head. "Or maybe you *remember* too many."

There was silence again.

Then she whispered, "Tell me... what is love, really?"

He looked at her for a long moment, then answered, "I think love is what remains when all desire has fallen asleep."

—

The bus ride back was quiet.

Nobody said much. Not even Anjali.

Ishaan sat by the window, watching the trees sway under the dimming sky. Myra was two rows ahead. But their reflections, caught briefly in the glass — her gaze looking forward, his slightly turned — touched each other.

Not a word.

Not a touch.

Just a spark.

Without words.

—

That night, at home, as his grandfather read the same verse once more — "... Radha's love knew no possession. Only presence..." — Ishaan closed his eyes and let the story carry him.

Not into fantasy.

But into something very, very real.

Chapter 6: The Early Morning Encounter

The bell for the next day had not yet rung, but Ishaan Sharma was already standing in the quiet corridor of Pine Crest School. The sun hadn't fully risen, yet a golden hue tinged the edges of the sky, giving the old colonial-style building a dreamlike glow. He could hear the soft rustle of leaves and the far-off chirping of birds just awakening from sleep.

His steps had been guided not just by habit but by an inner pull, an invisible thread pulling him toward something significant. The events of yesterday—Myra's unspoken gaze, the heat in his chest, the almost-touch, and the moment where silence had been louder than sound—still simmered inside him like warm embers beneath ash.

He wasn't sure what awaited today, but he sensed something beyond the ordinary.

The classroom door creaked slightly as he pushed it open. To his surprise, Myra was already there—curled up playfully on top of the long wooden table near the window, her head resting near where he usually sat. Her eyes sparkled with mischief, and her hair flowed freely, catching the early rays like a waterfall of light.

"Beat you to it," she whispered, grinning like a child who'd stolen a piece of cake before dinner.

Ishaan raised an eyebrow, half amused, half intrigued. "Do you always lie on tables this early in the morning, or is today special?"

She giggled softly. "Maybe I felt like being art before the day began."

He chuckled, his laughter echoing gently in the empty room. "You do have a strange definition of art."

"But beautiful, right?" she asked, stretching lazily, her head now just inches from his arm.

The proximity. The innocence. And yet, a teasing sensuality danced between them. Ishaan felt it like a pulse, a current beginning from somewhere deep in his being—an instinct as ancient as life itself.

A rush of energy, unmistakable in its nature, surged upward—first coiling at the base of his spine like a serpent ready to strike, then rising like smoke up a chimney. For a fleeting second, the primal merged with the sacred. The line between attraction and awareness trembled like a tightrope.

His breath slowed. His mind, though tempted by the intoxication of the moment, reached deeper. **Remember, my boy... desire is not your enemy, but your doorway**, his grandfather's words echoed like an old raga resounding in the silence. The teachings he had heard since childhood from the wrinkled lips of a man who wore both the garb of a saint and the smile of a rebel. He did not suppress the feeling. No. Ishaan had long known that suppression is merely buried attraction waiting to explode. Instead, he turned inward—like a river meeting the ocean.

He didn't run from the sensation; he rode it. In one swift, inner motion, the energy burst upwards—along the same spine it had once coiled around—now transformed, refined. As if a gust of wind had lifted his consciousness from the roots of survival to the open sky of stillness.

His eyes half closed for a moment—not in retreat but in presence.

Ajna... sahsrara... silence.

He felt as if his whole being had become a flame—still, unmoving, and aware. The classroom, Myra, the table—all there, but also not. He was both in the scene and beyond it, like a witness watching a movie, feeling it, yet untouched.

Myra noticed the shift.

Her playful smile faded, replaced by awe. She sat up slowly, blinking at him. "What just happened?" she whispered, her voice barely audible.

Ishaan opened his eyes, now deeper and calmer. "Nothing... and everything."

She leaned in closer, her expression a mix of curiosity and reverence. "You changed. I saw it. I felt it. Like you were here... but not."

He smiled softly. "Sometimes, the fire of desire lights the path. If we can see it, not chase it."

Her brows furrowed slightly. "But... weren't you tempted?"

"I was," he admitted. "But that energy doesn't always have to go where the world wants it to. It can become something else."

She blinked, stunned. "That's... actually beautiful."

Just then, footsteps echoed faintly outside. Probably teacher madam. Maybe Mr.Dutt. The spell would break soon.

Myra quickly hopped off the table, now self-conscious. "If anyone saw us like this..."

He chuckled gently. "They'd probably call it 'art'."

She gave him a playful shove, then paused. "Ishaan... I think... you're not just a student here. You're something else."

"Neither are you," he said quietly, looking into her eyes.

She stared back, and for a second, something ancient and silent passed between them—a knowing, a familiarity from another lifetime, perhaps. As if they had played this scene before, under different skies, in different bodies.

Then, the classroom door opened.

It was Mr.Dutt.

"Early birds, I see," he said, arching an eyebrow.

"Just reviewing homework," Myra lied quickly, brushing her hair behind her ears.

Mr.Dutt looked at them for a moment too long, as if sensing something deeper beneath the surface, but said nothing and walked to his table.

The morning classes passed with strange quiet intensity. Ishaan noticed Myra glancing at him now and then—not flirtatiously, but almost... worshipfully. Like he had touched something sacred, and she had seen it.

At lunch, Gagan caught up with him.

"Dude, what's going on with you two?" he asked, nudging Ishaan with a teasing smile. "You've been radiating some yogic-glow-baba-vibes."

Ishaan shook his head, smiling. "Nothing happened. And yet... something changed."

Gagan looked puzzled. "Bro, stop speaking in riddles."

Anjali joined them at the table. "Myra's been so quiet since morning. Like she saw a ghost."

"Maybe she did," Ishaan said softly.

Anjali raised an eyebrow. "You're weird, Sharma. But... cool weird."

That evening, as the sun dipped behind the hills, Ishaan walked alone near the school's back gardens. He often came here when something inside him stirred. Today, the air was rich—not with scent, but with meaning. Every leaf, every shadow seemed to whisper stories.

He remembered his grandfather sitting under the banyan tree back home, telling tales of energy, of Kundalini, of how the path was not about escaping life but seeing it clearly—desire included.

Desire is the matchstick. Awareness is the flame. And love is the light that remains once both disappear.

He smiled at the memory.

A soft crunch behind him made him turn.

It was Myra.

"I knew you'd be here," she said, a little breathless.

"How?"

"I don't know. I just... felt it."

They sat on the wooden bench under the tall cedar tree.

After a long silence, she asked, "Do you think... I could ever do what you did this morning?"

"What did I do?"

"You turned... something hot and messy... into something quiet and sacred."

He looked at her. "You already can. You just have to watch. And not run away."

She was quiet for a while. "Sometimes I feel like I was born knowing something... and forgot it along the way."

"You're remembering now."

A gentle breeze brushed past them.

"Ishaan..."

"Yes?"

"Who are you, really?"

He turned toward her, not with pride but simplicity.

"A student. A seeker. A boy who met someone who reminds him of a path he once walked."

Her eyes glistened. "And who am I?"

He smiled. "She who became my guru."

They sat in silence. No drama. No declarations. Just the sacredness of presence.

Chapter 7: The Year of Flowing Energy

A soft breeze brushed the dew-laced courtyard of Pine Crest School, gently stirring the silence of dawn. The events of that morning—the moment Myra had playfully reclined on the table and Ishaan had transmuted raw desire into pure presence—had not ended with the bell. They had marked the beginning of a silent revolution.

That morning had not merely passed—it had opened a gate.

In the weeks that followed, Ishaan noticed a strange phenomenon within himself. Every glimpse of Myra, every moment she leaned forward to whisper to Anjali or laughed over some silly joke, sent currents of energy rippling through his spine. It wasn't desire in its old form anymore. It wasn't restless or consuming. It was... flowing. Almost like music.

He began to call it The Year of Flowing Energy in his diary.

"You look like you've seen a ghost," Gagan chuckled, nudging Ishaan with his elbow as they sat beneath the tall gulmohar tree during lunch.

"Not a ghost," Ishaan said, his eyes still dreamy. "A goddess."

Gagan rolled his eyes. "Oh no, not again. Is this about Myra?"

Ishaan smiled but didn't answer.

"Bro," Gagan said, biting into his sandwich, "I swear, one day you'll see her and float up like Hanuman did when he heard the name of Ram."

"Maybe that's what love really is," Ishaan whispered. "The way it makes you light."

Gagan paused, genuinely curious now. "Okay, what's happening with you? You've stopped talking like a schoolboy and started talking like Kabir. Did you hit your head somewhere or... meditate too much again?"

Ishaan grinned. "You won't believe this... but sometimes when I look at her, I see Dada Guru's face for a second. Not literally. It's like... like Myra and he have merged inside me as symbols. One stands for love, the other for discipline. Both lead me back to the same stillness."

Gagan stared, then gave a low whistle. "That's some next-level stuff."

What followed was a year unlike any Ishaan had ever known. It was as if the entire universe was conspiring to test the strength of this new awareness.

One morning, the biology teacher was supposed to explain human reproduction. Detailed diagrams were drawn on the blackboard, but by some strange twist of fate, Ishaan was absent that day.

"Lucky escape," Gagan later joked. "They showed everything. I mean everything."

But for Ishaan, it didn't feel like coincidence. It felt like divine orchestration.

"If I had seen those images then," Ishaan explained to Gagan later, "I think my mind would have cooled the fire too soon. You know how when you explain something too early, the mystery vanishes? This fire... it needed to burn a little longer."

Gagan nodded thoughtfully. "You mean like Krishna and the gopis?"

Ishaan blinked. "What do you know about Krishna and the gopis?"

"Hey," Gagan said, pretending to puff his chest, "I may be goofy, but I'm not ignorant. My nani used to tell me stories. Krishna dancing with all the gopis at once. Everyone thought it was sensual, but she said it was spiritual. Like divine love flowing everywhere."

Ishaan's eyes lit up. "Exactly! People think it's about one man and many women. But it's not about numbers. It's about the capacity to hold many reflections of love, without breaking. Without lusting. That rasa... it's a dance of the soul."

Gagan slowly nodded. "So you think what you're experiencing is... that?"

"Maybe a little slice of it," Ishaan said. "This love, this attraction—it's intense, yes. But it's also sacred. Like the bhakti of Meera. Like Radha's surrender."

One evening, Ishaan sat alone in the school library, flipping through a book on Indian mysticism. The words blurred before his eyes as waves of energy rolled up his spine just at the thought of Myra walking down the corridor. He closed his eyes.

There she was.

Not as a physical form, but as light. Flowing, glowing, transforming.

The image faded, and in its place appeared his Dada Guru, seated in lotus pose, smiling faintly.

Then both forms melted into a single golden sphere.

He sat frozen for a long time, unsure if he had meditated or dreamt.

The mysticism deepened when he began waking up at odd hours of the night, his spine alive with sensations. It was not sexual. It was something subtler. Like someone pouring soft golden threads through the back of his head. He once described it to Gagan as "dreaming through the spine."

"Dude, you need to sleep more," Gagan joked.

"No," Ishaan replied, eyes shining, "I need to wake up even more."

They laughed, but Ishaan was serious. There was something inside him transforming quietly, like a seed growing underground.

A curious incident happened near the school pond.

He and Myra had gone to fetch a lost volleyball. They were alone. The sun dappled through the trees. As she leaned over to grab the ball, her fingers brushed his.

For a fraction of a second, everything froze.

No bird chirped.

No wind blew.

And then, in that stillness, a rush of energy shot up Ishaan's spine like a flame.

Not the restlessness of old desire, but a roar of divine sweetness.

He looked at her, breathless.

She smiled and said, "Are you okay?"

"I think I just met God," he replied softly.

Myra laughed, but her cheeks flushed slightly. Perhaps she felt it too.

That year, Ishaan discovered a secret about energy. That it doesn't obey our logic. It flows where it finds love, meaning, and mystery.

His Dada Guru's teachings echoed within him more powerfully now: Kama, when not chased, becomes Prema. Prema, when not possessed, becomes Bhakti. Bhakti, when surrendered, becomes Mukti.

Each time he remembered Myra, he did not try to push her away. He let the fire of attraction rise, then guide it upwards.

His focus shifted to his Ajna chakra during meditations. Often, tears rolled down his cheeks without any clear reason. Bliss had begun dripping through the cracks of his teenage restlessness.

One evening, during a thunderstorm, Ishaan wrote in his diary:

"I no longer want to touch her skin. I want to touch her light."

"I no longer wish she loved me back. I wish she finds that same river flowing inside her that now carries me."

"This love... it doesn't want to possess. It wants to merge."

He paused.

Then added:

"Maybe she has already become my guru."

The monsoon passed. So did the year.

But the energy stayed.

What had begun as a spark without words had turned into a river without banks. And Ishaan Sharma, the boy once afraid of his own desires, was now sailing its waters like a mystic in love.

Still unsure where it would take him.

But finally, fully, unafraid.

Chapter 8: The Kamandalu Moment and Classroom Tensions

A day of dull lessons and chalk dust was suddenly illumined by an innocent quip that would live in Ishaan's memory for years. The moment came during a chemistry lab session, when he reached for an oddly shaped glassware item—a distillation flask, curved and elegant, with a handle-like projection. Myra, ever attuned to symbolism and irreverent wit, chuckled and said, "Is that Baba's kamandalu?"

Ishaan froze, then smiled slowly. There was something in the way she said it—not mocking, not reverent, just playful and laced with strange familiarity. Her words lingered, reverberating far deeper than the tiled walls of the lab. The kamandalu—a yogi's water pot—symbolized detachment and wisdom, a curious metaphor to come from the lips of a girl whose presence stirred in him everything but detachment.

Myra moved on with her task, unaware perhaps of the impression she had just left. But Ishaan, who lived life more inwardly than out, would carry that moment like a monk carries his kamandalu—not for the water it held, but for what it symbolized.

A week later, as if that quiet impression had lingered and grown roots, Ishaan found himself beneath the old peepal tree with Gagan. A gentle breeze stirred the dust around their feet. Gagan chuckled to himself, the memory still vivid.

"I still remember how Myra ran after you last week," he said, grinning. "Screaming, 'Baba Ishaan, give me your Kamandalu!'—just because you were holding that weird glass flask of yours."

Ishaan smirked, eyes half-closed in amusement. "She thought I looked like a wandering monk with that in my hand."

"Well, you kind of did," Gagan teased. "But seriously... is there a reason sages always carry that pot? I mean, beyond the old-school thermos theory?"

Ishaan's expression shifted from playful to thoughtful. "There is, Gagan. The Kamandalu is not just a water pot—it's a symbol, a powerful one."

Gagan tilted his head, intrigued.

"It represents the energy stored in the base chakras, especially the Muladhara," Ishaan explained. "A sage who's mastered his energies doesn't waste them through scattered actions or emotions. Instead, he gathers them, conserves them—like water collected drop by drop into that pot."

"So it's like carrying their spiritual fuel?" Gagan asked.

"In a way, yes," Ishaan nodded. "That's why you'll often see them sprinkle water from the Kamandalu when blessing or cursing someone. But the real act isn't in the water—it's symbolic of channeling a focused stream of their conserved energy through the senses, directed by intention. A fragment of power released with precision."

Explaining it to Gagan reminded him of those lighter days with Myra—when even mockery felt like warmth, and words carried the comfort of being understood. But that lightness—the playful ease Ishaan felt in Myra's company, where even mockery felt like warmth—never lasted too long in the shared atmosphere of adolescence, where friendships swayed like reed in uncertain wind. Tensions soon crept in like shadows under the door, subtle at first, then more pronounced.

Anjali, who had once smiled freely in the tuition circle they all shared, began withdrawing into silence. One day, her frustration erupted. "Why does Myra treat me like I'm invisible? Just because she's from the city doesn't mean she's superior. We all travel distances—I come from even farther. Yet she behaves like she owns the place."

Her words, whispered to Ishaan outside the tuition center as the sun dipped into orange and birds called each other home, left him troubled. He knew Myra wasn't heartless, but neither was Anjali lying. There was indeed a certain aloofness Myra wore like perfume—present even when not overbearing.

Ishaan tried to console Anjali with neutrality. "Maybe it's unintentional. Maybe she's shy with girls."

Anjali stared at him with the bitterness of someone not truly consoled. "Or maybe you're just defending her because you—"

She didn't finish. She didn't need to. The sentence hung suspended like a spider's silk—fragile, glistening, potentially dangerous.

In the days that followed, Myra seemed distant. Her eyes, usually pools of glimmering mischief, now looked elsewhere when Ishaan tried to catch her gaze. Perhaps she'd heard of Anjali's outburst. Perhaps she had noticed his silence when he should've stood by her.

She didn't say a word, but her silence spoke entire chapters.

Then came another quiz competition—this time partnered with an intelligent guy, Vinod—an inter-school event that turned the tide of Ishaan's standing among his peers. He answered with precision, poise, and surprising humor. He wasn't just the studious, quiet boy anymore; he was someone. A presence.

After their school bagged the second position, and as applause faded, a curious thing happened. A girl—not Myra, not Anjali—stepped forward, handed him a rose folded into a note, and said aloud for all to hear, "Would you accept me as your dharma sister?"

The crowd hushed. Someone giggled. Ishaan's ears burned. His real cousin sister, Ranjana, who stood not far behind him, stiffened. She stepped forward, not unkindly, and said with gentle firmness, "RakshaBandhan is sacred. Don't turn it into theatre."

The girl, embarrassed, retreated into anonymity. Ishaan smiled at Ranjana in silent thanks. He owed her more than this moment. It was she who had, with some difficulty and many requests, managed his school transfer months ago. From a chaotic institution in the city where he was lost in the crowd, to this quieter, more nurturing environment. It was here that he met Myra. It was here that his life had subtly pivoted.

Later that evening, when the moon rose pale behind the neem tree near his study window, Ishaan reflected on how much had shifted. He had grown. He had begun to matter—to others, but more importantly, to himself. And yet, all of this gain came laced with the ache of Myra's unspoken discontent.

He longed to explain, to tell her that neutrality wasn't betrayal, that fairness wasn't coldness. But in the realm of unsaid things, silence reigns supreme.

In the classroom, the air had changed. A few classmates, sensing the triangle of tension, began to make sport of it. Whispered comments. Glances exchanged. Myra didn't respond, nor did Ishaan, but the undercurrents grew stronger.

His intelligent quiz partner, Vinod—a clever tease—soon turned his charm toward Myra. Nothing crude; just lingering touches on her notebook, excessive praise for her handwriting, and jokes that always placed her at the center. Myra bore it with a mix of patience and discomfort, but her eyes, whenever Ishaan was around, seemed to ask: Will you not say something?

But Ishaan, ever the monk in the marketplace, remained composed. He had trained himself to observe without reacting, to internalize the churn and let it transmute.

Some started calling him a “dead lover”—a phrase both mocking and mystic. He didn’t mind. He preferred the still waters that ran deep to waves that crashed for show.

And yet, he noticed everything. The way Myra’s voice dipped when she was sad. The way she twirled her pen when thinking hard. The way her eyes followed him, even when turned away. He was still very much in the story, even if playing the part of the silent witness.

He knew their differences like he knew constellations in the night sky. She, short and swift like a sparrow; he, tall and steady like an old pine. Her voice sang like river currents; his came out like the hush between waves. She belonged to a family that navigated metro traffic and mall escalators. He had grown up beneath mango trees and between rice paddies. Their worlds had touched, yes, but could they ever blend?

Still, the pull remained. He began to believe it was not the kind that demanded union, but the kind that catalyzed growth. Like a moon that does not touch the sea but moves its tides regardless.

One day, as they packed away their practical files, Myra said softly, “You’ve changed.”

He met her gaze evenly. “Or maybe I’ve just arrived into myself.”

She looked at him with something between longing and regret. “You used to listen with your eyes. Now you listen like a saint.”

“I still hear you,” he said. “Only deeper.”

She didn't reply. But she smiled. A smile that said: I believe you. But I don't know what to do with it.

The months wore on. Exam fever replaced youthful drama. Anjali found new friends. Myra began taking more leaves. Ishaan, though still attentive, became more inward, more reflective. Their lives, like rivers once parallel, began curving in different directions.

Yet, he always remembered the kamandalu moment.

He never used that instrument again in the lab without thinking of her. Of the laughter, the intimacy, the lightness. That fleeting second of shared myth and meaning. And he realized that maybe love was never meant to last in the form that first births it.

Maybe it was meant to become something else—something subtler. Like a mantra whispered once but echoing for lifetimes.

And so Ishaan, now on the cusp of adulthood, carried Myra not in his arms, but in the hollows of his soul. Like a true ascetic—not one who renounces love, but one who transmutes it.

She who once teased him with a reference to sages and water pots had unknowingly given him both his metaphor and his mission.

She who became his Guru.

Chapter 9: The Silence That Spoke

It was the summer of slow endings—the kind where petals fall not with a breeze, but with time itself stretching like a languid yawn. The school corridors had started to feel strangely hollow, though still alive with young laughter and occasional mischief. Yet for Ishaan, something had shifted. A deeper silence had nestled within him—a silence not born of absence, but of arrival. Something had arrived within him, and that something was peace.

Myra, on the other hand, seemed to have grown sharper in her expressions. Her face was now a canvas of contradictions. Where once there had been a gentle mischief and honeyed glances, there now remained a flicker of questions—unasked, unanswered, and perhaps even unanswerable. Their meetings had become few and far between, but when they happened, they carried the density of a thousand untold dialogues.

Once, in a fleeting encounter at a local temple fair, their eyes met again—those familiar eyes that had once dreamed in harmony. Myra's face hardened momentarily. Her brows knit together, not out of fury, but as if trying to read something that had faded from the surface of a long-weathered book. She did not speak. Neither did Ishaan. The moment passed like a cloud covering and uncovering the sun in the span of a heartbeat.

But within that silence, Ishaan saw the pain. Not hers alone, but a collective pain—the kind birthed by beautiful things that time had quietly unraveled. Her eyes whispered accusations that her lips didn't voice, as though she wanted to ask him why he had let go of something so pure, and why he now looked at her with the stillness of a monk instead of the yearning of a lover.

He did not blame her for the suspicion she had once flung through her expressive silence—the suspicion of being molested, hurt, or betrayed. That moment, long past, had stung him deeply. Not because of guilt, for he knew he had done nothing wrong, but because it fractured something sacred: trust. And yet, she had recoiled the dagger of suspicion almost as soon as she had drawn it, her eyes softening with a remorse he could never unsee.

He remembered that strange moment vividly, as though it had occurred only yesterday. She had said nothing explicitly, but her body had momentarily stiffened, her posture withdrawn, eyes flashing with an ancestral warning. A moment later, guilt overtook her face like an eclipse, and she looked at him with the mercy of a goddess who had erred. That duality—of being feared and

forgiven in a single breath—had struck him like lightning cleaving an ancient tree.

Yet even then, Ishaan had not spoken. Silence had become his language. He had begun to understand the essence of Krishna, who dances with love, yet never clings; who smiles from within a distance, never forcing nearness. Like Krishna, Ishaan had become adept at appearing involved, while internally dwelling on the mountaintop of contemplation. His was no longer the love of the world—it was the love of the soul seeking the Self.

And Myra—she had once been his mirror to the world. Her laughter had reminded him of the first rains, her encouragement had pushed him toward knowledge, and her rebukes had awakened him more than any scripture. In every sense, she had played the role of a living guru, unknowingly shaping the currents of his inner evolution.

He recalled those early school days when Biology madam would praise him in class. Myra, sitting amidst her friends, would beam with pride, her smile wider than her words. “He deserves it,” she’d say, loud enough for others to hear, as if endorsing his genius before the world. Her faith in his capabilities had fueled a fire in Ishaan to strive not for marks alone but for meaning.

Her guidance hadn’t always been sweet. Sometimes, she’d drop a heavy truth masked as jest: “People waste time in illusions. Build a career if you really want to be taken seriously.” She had said it once in front of the entire class, her voice dipped in a mix of sarcasm and concern. For Ishaan, that sentence became a mantra—not for the rat race, but for the cultivation of purpose. That day, she wasn’t a girl with doe-eyes and mischief; she was a sage disguised in a school uniform.

But Ishaan’s contemplations had not only been about her. They were deep-rooted, extending far into his childhood. He had once shared a bond of great friendship with Govind, a cousin brother who had lived in their home. That boy had been a firecracker of energy—naughty, hard-working, curious. When he moved away, Ishaan’s heart had ached silently. Strangely, when Myra entered his life, he found her carrying shades of that boy. Her liveliness, her spark, her subtle rebellion—it was like the soul of his cousin had returned in a new form, a feminine avatar. The continuity of contemplation simply changed its object.

In all these emotional symphonies, Ishaan had restrained himself. Even as others joked, teased, or poked fun about his feelings, he never openly

confessed, never proposed. He used to think he would wait until he became ‘something’—stable, independent, worthy. Sometimes, he believed his restraint was noble. Other times, it felt like cowardice. But the truth lay somewhere in between: he was torn in a subconscious tug-of-war. The soul whispered wait; the world shouted act. He obeyed the whisper.

Eventually, life carried him forward. Degrees were earned, careers built, and responsibilities accepted. He even entered the domestic stage of life through an arranged marriage. But none of it dulled his inner longing for a spiritual completeness. For Ishaan, real success meant awakening the Kundalini, attaining that which even desire cannot dream of. And when it happened, years later, in the silent solitude of his meditation, he knew he had arrived—not at a destination, but at a beginning.

In that state of self-realisation, everything dropped away—lust, fear, ego, ambition. The memories of Myra were no longer tinged with yearning or sorrow. They became sacred—a part of the scripture of his life. He saw her not as a lost love but as an embodied lesson. Their story, however incomplete in form, had been complete in essence.

Fate brought them together one last time, in a quiet by-chance meeting on a street shaded with gulmohar trees. She looked at him, brows slightly drawn, lips unspeaking. Her face bore a shadow of annoyance, maybe even pain, but no words came. Ishaan didn’t explain, didn’t justify, didn’t apologize. Not because he didn’t care—but because he cared enough not to interfere with her journey.

He knew: awakening could not be gifted or taught—it had to rise like a phoenix from one’s own ashes. And if her path held such a moment, it would arrive at its own pace. His role was over. He had fulfilled his dharma not as a lover, but as a witness.

And so, he let go—completely. No clinging to possibilities, no replays of what could have been. Life had chosen its tide. She drifted on her course; he on his. But the ocean remained one.

Soon after, Ishaan was selected to a far-off lunar university for advanced studies—a place as surreal and distant as his own mind had become. He accepted the offer not as an escape, but as an unfolding. Just as rivers don’t resist their flow, he surrendered. Little did he know that, after reexperiencing life on Earth, he would once again travel to the moon in the future—not as a

student this time, but as a researcher. And with that, a new chapter in his cosmic journey would begin. In fact, like attracts like; it's the law of attraction.

He didn't write to Myra. Didn't search her on social media. Didn't leave breadcrumbs for her to follow. Because when love transforms into spiritual fire, it no longer demands union—it simply illuminates.

And somewhere, perhaps in another corner of the world, Myra stood still with unanswered questions. But someday, when silence will descend on her like dusk on a restless lake, she might feel the same truth—not in words, not in visions, but in a sudden stillness.

In that stillness, Ishaan will be there—not as a memory, but as a vibration.

Not as the one she loved, But as the one who became.

Chapter 10: The Silent Requiem

The air of the lunar veterinary university was starkly different. There were no city horns, no temple bells, no school giggles echoing in hallways. Only the lowing of animals, the rhythmic shuffling of hooves, and the mechanical murmur of scientific instruments marked the days. Amid this unfamiliar music, Ishaan had been relocated, like a verse torn from a familiar poem and set into an alien stanza. Yet, the verse retained its rhyme, and in it, he tried to rediscover his meter.

The moonlit nights at the university were long and silent. Ishaan often found himself walking alone between the tall, whispering eucalyptus trees lining the campus boundary. In the silence, his inner symphony grew more profound. A strange peace had started dawning upon him—not the peace of having attained something, but the peace that comes after letting go. Myra's face still floated through the gaps of the past like a musical note in a forgotten tune. Not vivid, not sharp, but soft like a memory of fragrance, or the shadow of a smile one saw in childhood.

At times, he'd sit on the lonely bench near the cattle shed, where even the moonlight barely reached. And there, he would sink into deep contemplations, eyes half closed, posture calm, breath aligned with the winds. The cows, buffaloes, even the silent dogs—his fellow spectators—seemed to watch him like disciples witnessing a sage's trance. Myra had not left his heart entirely, but she had changed form. She was now like a mantra repeating within him, not to be desired, not to be reached, but to be understood and dissolved in.

Once, during a psychology seminar hosted for cross-disciplinary growth, a young lady professor presented a lecture on trauma and memory retention. She spoke of how unresolved relationships sometimes haunt the subconscious in the form of dreams, repeated emotional patterns, and contemplative echoes. Ishaan listened silently, nodding within, for he recognized himself in those very examples. His trauma was not one of violence or rejection. It was the trauma of a love that never happened fully, that remained partly born, like an infant never allowed to cry.

That evening, as the campus walked under stars, Ishaan stood still. The stars were clear, sharp, untouched by city dust. Looking up, he whispered something within—not words, not prayers, but a resonance. He felt Myra's eyes again, not in longing, but in stillness. The memory did not sting anymore. It just rested in him like a lotus on a quiet lake.

One day, a senior professor, an old man with a background in Sanskrit literature and Ayurvedic animal science, saw Ishaan scribbling in his notebook under a neem tree. The professor walked up, sat beside him, and without asking what he was writing, said, "Do you know, Ishaan, the sages never considered detachment as 'not feeling'? Detachment was the highest form of feeling—so intense that it couldn't cling to just one body or name."

Ishaan smiled faintly. "I think I'm beginning to understand that, sir."

"Good. Then you must write. Write her story, write yours. Let the pain become poetry, and the love become light," the professor said, placing a fatherly hand on his shoulder.

That very night, Ishaan began to write what would become the first draft of *She Who Became My Guru*. Not with the ambition of publishing. Not even to be read. But just to allow his inner world to be born outside. The first chapter he wrote was not their beginning, but their end. Their last silent meeting. How he had met her after his awakening, and how her eyes were still filled with hurt. He wrote how, when their eyes had met, his mind had dipped into a profound silence, while hers still struggled in storms. She was not less evolved; she was just not finished with her journey. Perhaps her anger, that silent wrath expressed only through brows and gaze, was her final trial. And he could not interrupt it. To explain anything would have been violence. To give her a spiritual lecture would be like pulling open the cocoon of a butterfly yet to be born. And so he had walked away.

The book began to write itself. Page by page, like rain dripping from monsoon leaves. Ishaan poured out his contemplations, his dreams, his childhood laughter with her, and the mischief they never dared. He wrote about the quiz competition, about Anjali's village bus rides, about Gagan's quiet company, about the silly chit joke that flushed cheeks and paused time.

He even wrote of the time Myra had, in a moment of misunderstanding, suspected him, and then immediately softened into remorse—how that one scene had taught him about the frailty of perception. That what we see is not always what is, and what we feel can deceive what we know. And yet, in that very fragility, there was something divine. A reminder that love, like fire, must be handled delicately.

Months passed. The book grew, and so did Ishaan. He didn't become a sage, nor a saint. But he did become silent. Not outwardly, but inwardly. Even in

laughter, he carried a pause. Even in crowds, he felt the company of the unseen. He began to notice the depth in others' eyes, the sadness behind jokes, the longing in the teacher's voice when narrating stories of idealism.

Then came a spring morning.

A message from an old friend—a mutual acquaintance from school—shared the news. Myra was now married. Settled in a semi-urban township near Delhi. Two children. Teaching in a small school. Active on social media, but rarely posting personal things.

Ishaan smiled. It wasn't jealousy, nor regret. Just a nod. Like two ships that sailed the same river once, now parting into different oceans. He closed his eyes and sent a silent blessing—not in her name, but to the universal soul she carried within.

That night, he lit a single diya in his room, not for ritual, but as symbolism. Then he wrote the last line of his book:

"And when her name faded from my lips, it found a home in my silence."
He did not know whether she would ever read the book. Whether it would reach anyone. But the act of writing had already fulfilled its purpose.

From that moment, Ishaan no longer awaited anything. Not reunions, not recognitions. He just continued doing what he had always done—drifting with the flow. But now, his flow had no resistance, no turbulence. Only grace.

And in that grace, Myra still lived. Not as a woman. Not as a lover. But as the pulse of his spiritual journey.

She had indeed become his Guru.

Chapter 11: The Dream Realization

It was a quiet Sunday morning.

The kettle hissed faintly as steam curled toward the sunlight spilling into Ishaan Sharma's modest study. His Himalayan home, now his spiritual retreat, lay nestled between deodars and silences. The world had changed. The pace had quickened, technology had taken strange shapes, people no longer paused. But Ishaan... he had slowed down. Deliberately.

At 52, his salt-peppered beard curled gently over his kurta collar, his eyes still sharp but wrapped in softness—the kind that life bestows only on those who have wept deeply, loved truly, and died inwardly more than once.

As he sipped from his brass cup of tulsi-chai, he opened his old leather-bound journal—one of the many from his Pine Crest School days. And without effort, memory poured in—not just as thoughts, but as living breath.
He closed his eyes.

And the dream began again.

He was sixteen. Or perhaps seventeen. Those years blurred. What remained sharp was that night—a night soaked in longing, ripe with ache, saturated with purity he hadn't earned but had somehow stumbled into.

He had cried himself into sleep with Myra's final letter pressed to his heart. Her handwriting still felt warm. The candle had danced one last time before surrendering to darkness.

And then, it happened.

In his dream—or what he now knew wasn't a dream at all—he had stood at the edge of a garden humming with mist. Not the school's garden, not Dadaji's orchard—but a strange otherworldly space drenched in jasmine. The air had shimmered. The path had glowed. And he—still a boy—had walked barefoot, weightless, toward a spiraling tower made of living light.

Now, as he sat in the quiet of his study, he whispered aloud, "I still don't know if I walked up that tower... or if it rose within me."

Each chakra had unfolded like a memory:

Muladhara—the base—was that childhood shame, that moment he'd failed to protect a wounded bird.

Swadhisthana—his adolescent desires, his first confusion about love and purity.

Manipura—the fire of rebellion, the pride of outshining even Vinod in a science project.

Anahata—the sacred wound of loving Myra, and letting her go.

Vishuddha—his silence during Dadaji's funeral, and the truths he couldn't voice to anyone.

Ajna—the flash of insight during Mr.Dutt's last lecture before retirement: "Every question that burns in you is a forgotten answer trying to rise."

Sahasrara—the summit. The dissolution.

He had floated in light. And then they appeared—his Dadaji and Myra, not as themselves but as a radiant union. In the dream, they merged until they were indistinguishable—one soul, one light.

Ishaan still remembered their words, as if whispered in his ears just yesterday:

"You were not walking toward us. You were walking into yourself."

That sentence had unraveled everything. All searching, all yearning—it had never been about someone else. Not Myra. Not God. It was always the Self, waiting in silence.

He remembered waking up that morning and just knowing—not intellectually, not even emotionally—but in every cell: **Kundalini had risen.**

There were no visions that day, no levitation, no miracle. Just a calm that pierced bone. A stillness that didn't need a name.

At school, Gagan had teased him mercilessly, "Oye Ishaan, you've turned into a perfect baba overnight? Should we start touching your feet?"

They'd all laughed. He had laughed too. But deep inside, something had crystallized—something ancient and irreversible.

Even now, as he stared at the tea swirling in his cup, he smiled faintly. "You were right, Gagan. I did become a baba. Just didn't wear orange."

That afternoon after the dream, he'd gone to Mr.Dutt.

He still remembered the quiet exchange beneath the old Bodhi tree.
"I saw her," Ishaan had said.

Mr.Dutt had kept watering the tree without looking up. "And did she show you who you are?"

"Yes," Ishaan had whispered, "And also who I'm not."

Mr.Dutt had paused, looked at him, and said, "Some dreams are not dreams. They are the soul's way of skipping linear time."

Back in the present, a breeze blew through the window. Pages of the journal fluttered like wings.

Ishaan ran a hand over the entry that began, "She Who Became My Guru"—his first attempt to capture what Myra had truly meant to him. Not as a teenage muse. Not as a romantic flame. But as a **living portal**—the very image of divine shakti who tricked his ego into surrender.

She didn't teach him in the traditional sense. She was the teaching. He had loved her fiercely. But what she awakened in him went beyond name and form. Beyond gender. Beyond story.

Now, five decades wiser, he no longer craved her return. She never left. She was there in every mountain breeze, every silent tear during meditation, every unexpected burst of joy while watching a child chase butterflies in the fields. That evening, Ishaan walked to the far edge of his land, where an old peepal tree stood. He sat cross-legged beneath it, just like in his school days.

Far below, the village was beginning to light its evening diyas. The temple bell rang once. A distant cow mooed.

He closed his eyes—not to meditate, but to listen.

Not to seek, but to remember.

And from within, rising like the soft breath of dusk, came her voice:

"You don't need to look for me anymore, Ishaan. You became me the day you let go of me."

He smiled.

His breath deepened.

The sky faded into indigo.

And from the silence of a well-lived life, a boy's dream whispered again.

—

Some memories do not belong to the past.
They are portals.
To our beginningless Self—
Waiting always,
In the garden of Light.

Chapter 12: The Departure

The dusk wind had quieted.

Ishaan sitting cross-legged under the Peepal tree, eyes closed, face turned towards the sky now painted in deep amethyst hues. The poem had left his lips like a sigh from the soul. That leaf he had held had long blown away into the silence, yet its weight still lingered in his palm like a message from the past.

And with that soft pull only memory can give, Ishaan found himself drifting backward again.

It was late March. The school bell had rung its last for the session. Pine Crest's red-brick buildings shimmered in the late afternoon heat. Mango buds were bursting open, and the seniors had already vanished into the folds of exam halls.

But Ishaan Sharma, for once in his life, wasn't among them.

He sat alone beneath the old deodar tree behind the staff room, the same place where Myra once laughed about Anjali's obsession with overboiled tea and where Vinod would mimic Mr.Dutt's booming speeches with unmatched accuracy. Gagan had stopped asking why he wasn't showing up for exams. Even Mr.Dutt, with his stern concern, had only patted his shoulder and said, "Life has different tests, Ishaan. Don't worry about the ones printed on paper."

And Ishaan had smiled. That strange smile he carried since the dream.

Something in him had uncoiled. Something that would never rewind again.

"You're not coming?" Myra had asked one afternoon, her tone half-casual, half-not. They were at the school terrace, feet dangling over the edge.

"To the exam hall?" he replied, feigning ignorance.

"To... life," she said, after a long pause.

He looked at her. Really looked.

She wore that sky-blue kurta again, the one with tiny mirrorwork dots that flickered in sunlight. Her hair was loosely tied, a few strands escaping onto her cheek. There was something unspeakably beautiful in her restraint.

"I don't know," he finally said. "Maybe this year I'll stay back and... just listen to the wind."

She laughed, but her eyes didn't.

"You sound like a sadhu."

"Maybe I'm becoming one."

They sat in silence, only the birds filling in the spaces their hearts couldn't.

Myra was leaving for college. Delhi. Psychology Honours. Anjali had already started preparing her farewell speech in the drama club. Ranjana was busy with pre-med coaching. Gagan was buried in his IIT dreams. Vinod had cracked every mock test Pine Crest had thrown at him.

And Ishaan?

He was floating somewhere between worlds.

He would walk to school, attend classes without speaking. He would sit through poetry lectures and forget to take notes. Sometimes he would be found staring at the school wall like he was waiting for it to open up and speak.

One day, while drawing the Chakras absentmindedly on the back of his notebook, Mr.Dutt walked up to him and said, "You know, Ishaan, not every spiral leads upward. Some carry us inward. That too, is a journey."

Ishaan had nodded slowly. He hadn't told anyone that sometimes, even in broad daylight, he felt as if he was watching everything from behind a soft veil —as if he had died and come back, but hadn't quite remembered how to live yet.

The last day before her departure, Myra didn't meet him. Not in school. Not by the deodar tree. Not even on the road where they sometimes shared roasted peanuts during winter walks.

There was no goodbye.

No letter. No message. Not even Anjali knew why.

For a week, Ishaan kept checking the school gate.

Then he stopped.

"You okay?" Gagan had asked once, tossing a cricket ball up and down in the field.

"Define okay," Ishaan smiled, lying on the grass.

"Still writing poems to the wind?"

"These days, even the wind is quiet."

Gagan lay down beside him. "I miss her too."

They didn't say who.

They didn't need to.

At home, his cousin Ranjana watched him with gentle suspicion.

"Bhaiya, did you take something?"

"Like what?"

"I don't know. You just... don't look real anymore."

He grinned, ruffling her hair. "Maybe I became a dream."

She shook her head, muttering, "You're becoming weirder than the sadhus on YouTube."

Yet even she noticed how he no longer snapped at taunts, how his eyes stayed soft even during arguments. How he would sometimes sit still for an hour, doing nothing, saying nothing, not even meditating—just being.

The exam results came. Ishaan had officially failed.

Principal Madam called him into her office.

"Ishaan, you're a bright boy. What happened?"

"I think," he said with a peaceful smile, "I passed in something else this year."

She looked at him, baffled. Then sighed.

"Come back next year. We'll keep your seat."

He bowed slightly. "Thank you."

That summer, he walked barefoot more often. Sat under trees. Watched ants build their tiny homes. Spoke to flowers. Once he even wrote a letter to the moon, folded it into a paper boat, and left it in the village stream.

He wasn't lost. He wasn't broken.

He was just... tuned to another frequency.

Years later, when Myra would write her first research paper on altered states of consciousness, she would unconsciously describe Ishaan without naming him.

And when Ishaan would read it online, decades later, he would smile.

A strange ache and peace would rise in him again, as always.

But by then, he would understand:

That some departures are really initiations. That not every silence is an absence. And that sometimes, the Guru leaves not to abandon you—but to make space for your real becoming.

Back under the Peepal tree, Ishaan opened his eyes.

A koel called out.

The wind stirred the leaves above.

He was not that boy anymore.

But the journey of that boy still lived within him—not as memory, but as light.

A departing light that had never truly left.

Chapter 13: The cosmic campus

The evening sun slanted through the golden pines that lined the path behind Pine Crest School, where Ishaan Sharma often wandered after classes. The leaves rustled in a familiar way, whispering secrets of boyhood afternoons, half-sketched dreams, and the echo of Myra's laughter when she'd once walked beside him there.

It had been years since that chapter—The Dream Realization—closed with the breathless hush of the cosmos pressing down on Ishaan's heart, whispering a purpose too vast to contain within earthly boundaries.

Now, under the subdued glow of a rising moon, he sat quietly beside a small pond near the school's old library, a spot once frequented by Gagan and him. The pond was overgrown, the water lilies curled with age, but the silence still held that same haunting calm. A perfect place for old memories to rise unbidden.

"You always dive too deep," Myra had once teased, poking his arm as he stared too long at an obscure Vedic manuscript. **"One day you'll get lost in those depths and forget to come back."**

But he had smiled, his eyes dancing with an invisible light. **"Maybe that's where the real truth lies—in the places most are too hurried to enter."**

That was the nature of Ishaan's study—not just of books, but of the soul of things. He didn't study about the stars, he entered them; he didn't read about consciousness, he listened to its breath between words.

Even now, his fingers still carried the warmth of old pages, and his heart pulsed with a reverence most people reserved for temples.

The world, however, doesn't always understand reverence.

His scores were good—solid—but not meteoric like Vinod's. When applications opened for BaikunthaVidyaMahavidyalaya, a cosmic-tier university on a lush exoplanet, Ishaan's name was never whispered in the hallways of probability. Not because he lacked potential, but because his kind of brilliance didn't scream; it murmured, it bloomed slowly like an ancient tree, rooted deep, unnoticed by those looking for shooting stars.

Instead, Vinod got in. Gagan had cheered, not knowing Ishaan had also applied in secret.

Ranjana noticed, though.
She always did.

"You're not hurt because you weren't selected," she said, offering him a steaming cup of tulsi chai one evening. **"You're hurt because you respected the material too much. And the world only respects speed, not depth."** Ishaan half-smiled. **"I studied with my heart and soul, not just my brain. I honored every word as if it carried life. Maybe that made me too slow to shine."**

"No," she said softly, **"It made you eternal. There's a difference."**

Months later, just as Ishaan had accepted that perhaps his journey would follow a quieter trail, a silver-hued envelope arrived in the mail—marked with the insignia of a crescent moon cradling a lotus:

Chandra VidyaVishwa — The Moon's First Interstellar University

He sat frozen on the edge of his bed, the letter shaking in his hands.

Myra's name flashed in his mind like a lighthouse through fog.
She would've known this was coming.
She always did.

He arrived on the Moon not with fanfare, but with wide eyes and a suitcase full of hand-written notes, crystals Gagan had gifted him for "good vibes," and a photo of Pine Crest's old classroom—Mr.Dutt scribbling metaphysics on the blackboard while pretending not to care that no one understood.

As he stepped onto the campus dome, his breath caught.

This wasn't Earth.

And yet, it was.

Only more.

Silver gardens floated in airless pockets, their vines curling around invisible supports. Classrooms shifted dimensions with lessons—one moment an amphitheater, the next, a floating disc above Saturn's rings.

Cultures from across galaxies mingled freely: luminous beings from Orion who spoke in pulses of color, meditative monks from Venus who had no mouths but sang directly into the soul, and even playful time-surfers from the Andromedan fringe who claimed to live every moment backwards.

But none of this overwhelmed Ishaan.
It called to him.
Because here, depth wasn't hidden.
Here, soul was not secondary.
On his third night, while walking alone near the anti-gravity observatory, Ishaan found a corridor marked only by a single character: ॐ.
He followed it, his feet pulled by something both ancient and futuristic.

Inside sat an elderly woman—her silver hair braided with stardust, her eyes ageless. She wore a robe that shimmered like night water, and her presence felt eerily familiar.

"Ishaan Sharma," she said without looking. **"You've arrived late, but right on time."**

He blinked. **"I don't understand."**

"Few do at first." She turned to him now, her eyes smiling. **"You were meant for Baikuntha, yes. But Baikuntha is for the brain. Here—Chandra Vidya—is for those who carry the weight of galaxies in their heart."**

He hesitated. "Who are you?"

She smiled. **"I am the echo of your Guru, the whisper of every moment you listened instead of speaking. I am the reminder that your journey never depended on outer recognition."**

He felt the space inside him shiver, expand.

She motioned to a portal behind her. **"Inside is your first real test. It is not written, and it cannot be solved. You will only pass by being what you've always been—yourself."**

The portal shimmered.

He stepped in.

Suddenly, he was back in Pine Crest.
Classroom 4B.

Gagan was waving a paper. **"Ishaan, I aced it! Vinod says he hacked the test."**

Mr.Dutt raised an eyebrow. **"Hacked the universe, more like."**
Anjali turned, whispering to Myra, who looked straight at Ishaan.

And in that look, it all returned—
The dream,
The realization,
The Guru.

He remembered that she was not just his first love or his spiritual compass—she was his mirror, his haunting, his call toward awakening.

He walked slowly toward her.

"Was this all... real?" he asked, his voice barely above breath.
She tilted her head. **"Does it matter? If the dream brings you closer to truth than waking life, isn't that the realest thing of all?"**
His eyes stung. He hadn't realized how deeply he had missed her presence.

"You became my Guru."
She smiled. **"And you... became your own."**
The scene shimmered.

He came to on a marble bench inside the observatory, the stars above sharper than ever.

The elder was gone.
But in her place, a crystal pendant lay glowing—a perfect balance of moonstone and obsidian.
Attached was a note:

"The departure is not from Earth, but from illusions. The journey is not to the stars, but through the soul."

Ishaan clutched the pendant tightly, breathing in its silent wisdom.

Back in his quarters, Gagan had just called through the interstellar line.

"Bro! You're literally on the Moon! Don't forget us Earthlings, haan?"
Ishaan chuckled, feeling grounded by the mischief in Gagan's voice.

"Never. You're still my dumbest connection to sanity."
"Vinod said you'd probably meditate your way into a blackhole."
"I probably will," Ishaan replied, laughing softly, **"and come out on the other side with answers no one asked for."**
"Sounds like you."

That night, before sleeping, he opened his old diary.
The one Myra had once doodled in.

A dried petal from their favorite Bodhi tree slipped out.

He placed it carefully inside his new textbook—Consciousness and Celestial Beings.

Because some wisdom must travel with you.

Across planets.

Across time.

Across memory.

And so began Ishaan's truest journey—not away from Earth, but deeper into the galaxies of his own spirit.

Every departure, after all, is also a return—to something we forgot we were always seeking.

And as the Moon cradled him in her luminous silence, Ishaan smiled.

Not because he had all the answers.

But because he finally knew what questions truly mattered.

Chapter 14: An Earthly Union

The amber sun lazily kissed the mountaintops as Ishaan Sharma, now in his early fifties, sat at his favorite hillside retreat. A small tea stall nearby whistled a nostalgic tune, mingling with the pine-scented air. A familiar worn-out book rested on his lap—She Who Became My Guru. He wasn't just reading it; he was reliving it. Each page moved not as print and ink but as a breathing echo of his past.

As the breeze gently flipped the paper, his eyes met the title of the next chapter

An Earthly Union.

And the story flowed back into him like a forgotten dream stirring awake. Years ago, after the cosmic intensity of Pine Crest and the silent wound left by Myra's absence, Ishaan had found himself burning—not from pain, but from an overwhelming inner fire that refused to settle. No mantra, no meditation seemed to douse the intensity. His mind, often serene, was now flooded by Myra's image—her laughter, her silence, the light she had once become within him.

It wasn't romantic longing—it was something deeper, yet dangerous. A kind of spiritual ache that refused to dissolve.

His family began to worry.

One of his close relatives, noticing his silent decline, suggested an arranged match. A girl named **Vedika**—a poised, kind, and independent woman from a distant connection in the extended family.

Ishaan had never met her before. And with his inner fire still unextinguished, he wasn't in a space to be picky or romantic.

So there wasn't much waiting time for Ishaan to select the best match, as usually happens in selective arranged marriages where one tries to choose the best fit like picking out the right attire from a bundle. He simply agreed—more out of exhaustion than enthusiasm.

He didn't do it for love. He did it like one reaches for water in a forest fire. A survival instinct. A hope that maybe this earthly bond would balance the heaviness of his unending contemplation. It wasn't a step toward love, but a strategy of defense.

The marriage happened quietly, almost too quickly.

Vedika entered Ishaan's world with her soft grace and subtle wisdom. She didn't expect fireworks. But neither did she expect the coldness that followed.

For months, Ishaan remained aloof. Not cruel—but disconnected. He didn't even realize it at first, but Vedika could feel it in the way he'd look through her instead of at her.

And then, slowly, his detachment turned into quiet control.

Not by intention—but by inner pressure.

He began instructing her on how to arrange things, how to speak, how to pray, how to carry herself in front of guests. He wasn't trying to dominate—but the fire of Myra's haunting presence was still flickering in his mind, making everything else appear dimmer, duller.

Myra's image—mystical and radiant—had become his subconscious standard. And though he never spoke her name, the echo of her presence made Vedika feel as if she was being compared to a goddess she couldn't see.

Unintentionally, Ishaan became a little dictator in the household, ruled not by ego but by the ghost of contemplation still clinging to his inner vision. He didn't know how to shut it off.

One day, after a quiet argument over something trivial, Vedika packed her things and left for her mother's house.

She didn't shout. She didn't cry. She just left—with dignity and silence.

That evening, Ishaan sat alone. The room was clean, calm, and lifeless.

And that's when it hit him.

The stillness was not peace—it was punishment.

He looked around and found her slippers still near the mat. Her unfinished book on the side table. Her half-written grocery list on the fridge.

And then something inside him cracked open—not loudly, but like dry earth splitting quietly before rain.

He realized he had pushed away a person who had entered his life with nothing but sincerity. Not because he didn't care—but because he hadn't healed.

Although he let her rest at her birthplace for a week, the very next week he went there himself, unable to bear the silence of her absence. With a softened heart and humbled spirit, he gently apologized for his behavior and requested her to return home, not out of duty, but because her presence had unknowingly become a part of his healing.

Standing in the threshold of her childhood home, he looked at her and said, "I was wrong. Not in words, but in spirit. I never meant to hurt you. I think I was punishing myself... and you got caught in it."

Vedika looked at him—not angry, but unsure. Still, something in his eyes made her return.

Not out of fear. But hope.

After that turning point, a quiet shift entered their lives.

The distance between them became a bridge rather than a wall.

Yet, for years, neither spoke of their past love stories. It was an unspoken agreement—not out of fear, but because the moment hadn't yet arrived. They lived with greater ease, greater respect. Still, there was something unsaid—something resting quietly between them.

Then one day, much later, something unexpected happened.

Ishaan experienced another glimpse of awakening—this time, not alone under stars or beside lakes, but through Vedika herself.

It wasn't dramatic. It was tender. A look she gave, a phrase she whispered, something about her presence cracked open another layer of his being. And in that silent opening, he felt his purpose with her had somehow been fulfilled.

After awakening with Vedika — even stronger than before — the game turned over. He dismissed many people's idea that Mayra would have been the best

match for him, for now he believed Vedika was the best match. With her help, he had attained the highest awakening, which meant that his real aim was centered on awakening; all other goals were secondary. It was not only with him, but in fact, awakening is the real and final aim of everyone.

And it was only **then**, after that soft awakening, that the past could be shared. One evening, sitting quietly on their rooftop beneath a golden sky, Ishaan turned to her and said, "There was someone in my life. She helped open something in me... I never understood what it was, but it changed me forever."

Vedika smiled gently and said, "There was someone in my life too. It ended peacefully, long ago... but he shaped a part of me."

They didn't ask too many questions. They just listened.

And in that honesty, something melted. As if the past, which had been frozen in their silences, finally began to flow.

From that moment onward, something precious shifted.

They began allowing each other to live more freely—without pressure or expectations. There was still respect, still care—but no more invisible bondage.

They loved each other now in a new way—legally together, yes, and within human boundaries—but spiritually free. As if they were testing the truth of unforced love.

In those days, they reconnected with a few old companions—not to return to their past, but to dissolve it completely. To free themselves from the invisible layers of conditioning that silently shaped them.

A strange and beautiful thing happened.

Their love deepened—but in a completely unexpected way.

They didn't become romantic in the usual sense. But they became truly loving.

Without attachment.

Without dependency.

They remained together but detached—loving each other without asking, needing, or expecting anything.

Now, as the last light of dusk dimmed across the sky, Ishaan closed the book softly and placed it against his chest.

The deodars swayed above him like old monks whispering prayers.

He smiled—not with pride, but with peace.

What began as a marriage of necessity had become a love beyond all conditions.

Not because they held on—but because they finally let go.

And in that letting go, they found a bond that no fire could burn.

Chapter 15: The Lunar Posting

The morning light slanted through the window, spilling softly across the wooden floor as Ishaan reached Chapter 15 of his book *She Who Became My Guru*. The garden outside his Himachal home lay bathed in a serene, misty glow. The silence was not empty—it felt watchful, as if the trees themselves leaned in to listen.

His fingers slowed over the pages as the words awakened the images, not from memory, but as though the past had arrived, knocking gently at the doors of the present. It wasn't just reading—it was reliving.

After years of earthly veterinary practice, Ishaan Sharma, now a quiet yet inwardly glowing man in his forties, found himself standing at the threshold of an unimaginable transition. An official letter from the Interplanetary Veterinary Alliance confirmed his posting to a lunar animal research center. The moon colony, once a scientific fantasy, had now grown into a peaceful sanctuary of learning and experimentation.

Ishaan didn't hesitate.

With Vedika by his side, and their children—twelve-year-old Diya, a budding stargazer with a laugh like chimes in the wind, and five-year-old Ruhan, mischievous and wide-eyed—they climbed into their family space vehicle. The personal space car hummed quietly like a purring cat, its dashboard filled with soft-glowing panels. It wasn't like boarding a rocket—it was more like taking a road trip through stars.

They flew over the Earth's atmosphere, past its blue cocoon, then slipped into the milky silence of space. The children giggled at the floating toys and bubble-like drinks. Vedika leaned back, silent, her eyes filled with shifting light. Ishaan looked at her, her form silhouetted against the cosmos. So much had passed between them, and yet something had begun to flower anew in the silent understanding they now shared.

While Ishaan, Vedika, Diya, and little Ruhan floating through the velvet stretch of space in their cozy family space car, the journey felt more like a celestial vacation than a relocation. They made joyful halts at floating restaurants shaped like glowing lotus petals, where gravity played tricks and food gently

orbited plates. Parks hung like magical bubbles in space, filled with soft, bouncing air-cushions and starry swings. In one dome, Diya danced in zero gravity while Ruhan giggled, chasing space bubbles. Vedika clicked pictures, and Ishaan, for once, let his heart soak in the joy—his family's laughter echoing gently in the silence of the stars.

The Earth became smaller and smaller. And then—the moon rose, not from a horizon, but from deep within Ishaan's chest.

As they descended toward the lunar habitat nestled on the inner curve of the Copernicus Crater, Ishaan felt an inexplicable shift. A presence.

His ancestral guru.

Not Myra. Not anymore. That image, once so blinding in its charm, now gently dissolved like moon mist in morning sun. Myra's contemplation had dimmed day by day ever since they left Earth's pull. And now, in this ancestral land—PitruLoka as whispered by ancient texts—the guru of his bloodline seemed to reawaken.

"I don't know why," Ishaan said to Vedika one night after settling in, looking out the porthole at the glowing expanse, "but I feel like this is where he used to sit. Like... like the moon cradled him."

Vedika smiled, wrapping a blanket around Diya who had fallen asleep on the reclining seat nearby. "Then maybe that's why you're here—to sit where he once sat, and see what he once saw."

They had not brought their pasts with them. That chapter had gently closed back on Earth, in those quiet talks and opened hearts. Now, they were not trying to belong to each other. They simply were.

The moon colony was unlike any place Ishaan had imagined. Not silver, not sterile. It was alive in silence. There were bio-domes filled with blue-green vegetation, and soft artificial gravity gardens where animals from across galaxies were studied and healed. Ishaan worked at the Interplanetary Veterinary Research Lab under the mentorship of Dr. Laisha, a gentle lunar woman whose calm voice reminded him of Anjali's—the same silence that did not demand, only listened.

There was something oddly freeing about space. You couldn't carry your emotional baggage here; the void simply wouldn't let you. It burned it away.

Gagan pinged him through interspace once with a cheeky message: "From Pine Crest School to Pet Moon School! Proud of you, space monk!"

Even Mr.Dutt sent a message, his voice aged but firm. "You always walked differently, Ishaan. I'm glad to see where that path led."

Vinod, still sharp and full of data, had sent him a detailed analysis on lunar soil effects on quadrupedal muscle composition.

Govind had recently retired. Ranjana, now a joyful grandmother, had laughed during a video call, saying, "You always belonged among stars, Ishu."

Yet, despite these distant voices, the moon had given Ishaan something he didn't expect—**stillness without loneliness**.

One moonlit evening, while watching Diya draw little constellations on the frosted window, and Ruhan pretending to be a gravity-cowboy, Ishaan suddenly found himself thinking of Pine Crest School again—not the bricks or the uniforms—but the boy he was. The one who had stared too long at stars. The one who'd first heard Myra's name like a bell inside the cave of his being.

"Myra was the flame," he thought, "but Dada Guru was the wick."

The insight struck not like lightning—but like moonlight. Gentle, cool, sure.

A few weeks later, while meditating in the transparent lunar chapel—a place designed for spiritual silence regardless of one's faith—Ishaan had a vision. His grandfather, seated calmly on a rock, looking out over a field of light. Not a word spoken, but a hand raised in benediction. That was all. And everything.

He rose from that meditation with tears in his eyes.

Not sorrow.

Not joy.

Just... release.

Vedika met him in the corridor. She didn't ask what he had seen. She only held his hand.

"I'll cook tonight," she said softly. "Even if the ingredients taste like moon potatoes."

He laughed. "As long as there's Earth masala, I'll survive."

Life on the moon was not perfect. But it was perfectly theirs. They had adjusted to shifts in gravity and the delays in messages from Earth. Diya had made friends with a Martian girl named Nyra. Ruhan had adopted a small, shape-shifting pet that squeaked like a rubber duck. Vedika had started teaching yoga to fellow colony members—her classes were known for laughter and unexpected wisdom.

And Ishaan—he worked. He healed. He listened to animals who didn't speak with words. Sometimes he sang ancient mantras while tending to injured lunar wolves. Sometimes he simply sat with them in silence, and they seemed to understand.

Slowly, imperceptibly, **his sense of Self expanded**.

He was no longer the seeker who needed fire to burn his doubts. He was the fire. He was the moon.

As Ishaan turned the last page of Chapter 15, the clouds over his garden lifted. A cool wind rustled the leaves. The birds were quiet, as if listening.

He closed the book slowly, placing it on his lap.

The wind carried the scent of earth and pine.

Somewhere in the sky, the moon waited.

Chapter 16: The Ancestors' Abode

Ishaan reached the sixteenth chapter while scrolling slowly through the weathered pages of *She Who Became My Guru*, seated on the edge of a boulder near a clear Himalayan stream in Himachal—his native land. The breeze carried the scent of pine and wildflowers, and the hush of the mountains gave the words on the page a living pulse. His fingers paused for a second on the heading, **The Ancestors' Abode**, and a strange pull of nostalgia coiled around his heart. The water rippled before him, as if mirroring the grey valleys of the moon. And as he began reading, the line between memory and moment dissolved effortlessly.

Returning to the Moon wasn't like revisiting a city or an old neighbourhood—it was like stepping into a dream you had once woken up from, only to find yourself dreaming it again, but wiser this time. Ishaan Sharma, now a seasoned veterinarian with a weather-wrinkled gentleness in his smile, stood once again on the soft dust plains of **PitruLoka**, where shadows walked slowly and the silence carried songs of the past.

The Moon had changed since his student days at **Lunar University**, or maybe he had. Back then, his limbs were lighter, his mind more restless, and his heart flared with the intense and nameless flame of longing. Myra. Her image, back then, had been seared into the grey landscape of the Moon like a mantra. It wasn't just memory; it was meditation. Her soft gaze, her unspoken words, her sudden silences—they had all danced in his consciousness, bathed in lunar tranquility.

Yet even amidst the deep pull of that image, something else had arisen—his Dada Guru. Whenever the image of Myra would intensify in that moonlit solitude, so would the vision of his Guru, standing silent in ochre robes, his eyes like twin moons of ancient wisdom. The Moon, after all, was **Chandraloka**, the realm of the ancestors, a place where meditating on lineage, legacy, and liberation came as effortlessly as breathing. Ishaan had often felt as if the Moon itself held the contemplative power of thousands of rishis and grandfathers whispering through its valleys.

Now, two decades later, Myra's image had softened, like a perfume clinging faintly to an old letter. His wife **Vedika** and children **Diya** and **Ruhan** filled the space where earlier only one name had echoed. Yet, as he stepped once again onto the Moon's surface, he felt the subtle shimmer of Myra returning—not as a woman, nor as a memory, but as a reflection of his own soul. She was no longer someone separate. She had dissolved into the great sacred fluid of his being, becoming part of what he now called awareness.

"Funny," he once wrote in a margin, "how one who stirred the storm becomes the stillness itself."

Back then, Ishaan remembered struggling with those overwhelming visions. To still the whirlpool, he had meditated on **Govind**, his cousin brother who had once lived in their home, an enigmatic figure full of spiritual curiosity. Merging Govind's moral strength with the image of Myra created a strange alchemy—a divine Yin-Yang. Myra's gaze turned prophetic; her silence began speaking the truths of the cosmos.

Even his Pine Crest days came back to him. He would often see **Mr.Dutt**, his old science teacher, in his dreams on the Moon, carrying a celestial blackboard and scribbling formulas that dissolved into Upanishadic verses. **Vinod**, his intelligent classmate, now a researcher in dark matter, had once joked, "Ishaan, you don't need a spaceship. You are a spaceship."

The Lunar University corridors had once echoed with **Gagan's** voice, singing retro Bollywood while Ishaan secretly stared out the window, thinking of Myra's absent presence. **Ranjana**, his cousin sister, had sent him voice notes back then, filled with homemade advice and cheerful rebukes, urging him to eat well and not let his head get lost "in those Moon books."

But this return was not merely academic—it was spiritual. The Moon had been officially designated as a psychospiritual habitat, and Ishaan's posting wasn't to treat space cows or lunar llamas—it was to explore how ancestral energies affected the psychic health of settlers. He was part vet, part mystic psychologist. One evening, while examining a Lunar Hawk—an alien-like bird adapted for low gravity flight—he saw them. Far away on the horizon, silhouettes danced. Not human. Not alien. Not ghost.

They were... energy drinkers. Beings that fed not on blood or flesh, but on contemplative energy. They shimmered like dew caught in starlight. These beings relished the deeply meditative aura of PitruLoka. When Ishaan would sit in dhyana, meditating on the intertwined forms of Guru and Myra, he would feel his thoughts lift like incense, and in those moments, he sensed them dancing—graceful, distant, never intruding, but always feeding. And in turn, they gave back something inexplicable. A deeper stillness. A broader silence. He recorded these experiences in a log but never sent them to Earth Control. Some truths must grow roots in silence.

Reading these pages now, Ishaan chuckled softly. "Why did I never propose to Myra, despite burning inside?" he had once asked himself.

The answer had unfolded slowly through years.

There were too many walls: cultural, social, and perhaps most formidable—the silence between them. Years had passed without a single word exchanged.

Ishaan had once considered breaking that silence, but the imagined effort of convincing her, her family, his family, the rituals, the explanations, felt more exhausting than uplifting.

So he chose an arranged marriage, not because it was easier, but because it was possible.

He had written once: "Why diminish the joy of an upcoming arranged marriage by openly mourning an inaccessible love?"

Still, divine love stories from the Puranas whispered their answers to him.

Radha never married Krishna. Shiva married Parvati only after years of austerity. These stories weren't just stories—they were energy blueprints.

Ishaan realized the seers had deliberately embedded love tales in scriptures so that even a flicker of romantic energy could be sublimated into a full-fledged path of awakening. Romantic memory merged with spiritual devotion, and something beyond the two emerged—something powerful and liberating.

He remembered one particular night.

A meditation session had reached an unexpected intensity. Myra's form appeared before him not as a girl, but as a celestial goddess, her outline flickering with cosmic fire. Then it shifted, merging with the image of his Guru. Myra's gaze became his Guru's. Ishaan had cried then—not from sadness, but from awe.

He had understood.

Myra was not outside him.

She never was.

The chapter neared its end. Ishaan lifted his eyes from the page. The sun had dipped low over the mountains, casting orange-gold light through the tall pines. Birds fluttered back to their nests. A cowbell rang faintly from a distant pasture. Somewhere nearby, children laughed, their voices carried on the breeze like echoes from a simpler time.

He let the book rest on his knees and looked up at the sky. The Moon had just begun to rise, its faint arc glowing like a half-drawn smile. He whispered aloud, "PitruLoka isn't just on the Moon. It's anywhere your soul touches its lineage... and bows."

In the distance, the stream sang its eternal song, as if echoing his prayer: Jai Guru Dev, Jai Myra Dev, Jai the Self that was never separate.

And with that, Ishaan closed the chapter—not just in the book, but in his heart, which had never been broken, only opened a thousand times to newer skies.

He leaned back, eyes distant, memory stirring.

"I still remember the day I decided to leave the Moon," he murmured to himself. "The medical facilities there—limited, cold, clinical—weren't enough for an aging body like mine. I was growing old, and strangely, I found myself yearning for the things I once took for granted: the smell of soil after rain, the warmth of sunlight filtering through leaves, even the chaos of crowded streets."

A smile flickered at the corner of his lips.

"That hunger brought me back. I took early retirement and returned to Earth. Because in the end, no matter how far you travel... home is home, and Earth is Earth."

Chapter 17: Tantra and Reconnection

Ishaan reached the seventeenth chapter while scrolling gently through the worn yet radiant pages of *She Who Became My Guru*. The golden sunlight filtered through the old Himalayan cedar tree outside his verandah, dappling the terrace floor in shifting patterns. The breeze carried a faint scent of wild jasmine and the sound of temple bells from a distant village. At fifty-two, he sat barefoot, his shawl slightly falling off one shoulder, feeling the chapters not as memories but as a sacred present moment—unfolding, breathing, alive. As he turned the page, the memory of Moon’s silent valleys dissolved slowly into another rhythm—warmer, more embodied, more intimate.

After his long lunar posting at PitruLoka station, Ishaan had returned to Earth not as the same man who once left. The Moon had carved him inwardly, sanded his rough edges, softened his longings. But in softening, it had also exposed him. His reunion with Vedika, though filled with warmth, had also been shadowed by a silent current—something unspoken, almost spectral.

He would lie beside her at night, hearing Diya’s quiet breaths from the adjacent room, and still feel as though some part of his soul was adrift—watching stars over the lunar dome. And Vedika, wise and quietly alert as ever, noticed.

One evening, while they were preparing halwa together—him lazily stirring, she adjusting the cardamom—she said without looking up,
“Do you know, Ishaan, sometimes the only way to return to someone is not through memories, but through energy.”

He blinked, then laughed. “Are we back to decoding tantra over dessert?”

She smiled without responding.

Both had grown up in deeply Tantric lineages—hers from a family that revered the Lalita path, his through subtle exposure via cousins like Govind and his grandfather’s eclectic library. But they had both practiced only what mainstream society permitted—mostly satvik, meditative, structured. Little touch of the left-hand path, maybe in whispers or books, but never in living reality.

But something about Ishaan’s return—his moonlit detachment, his eyes carrying forgotten verses—nudged Vedika into a sacred mischief.

She began lighting diyas earlier in the evening, adding gentle yoni-shaped lamps on the brass puja tray. The incense changed—earthier, muskier. One day, she even replaced their usual background mantras with a slow, trance-like chant of Tripura Sundari, layered with ancient Vedic drones.

The energy in the house shifted subtly. Ishaan noticed it but said nothing, choosing to watch. Until one twilight, she asked,
“Will you meditate with me? Like we did when we first met?”

He nodded. But this time, it was different.

The room was lit in a soft reddish hue. Not by decoration, but by the placement of diyas and one small red cloth covering a lamp. Vedika sat opposite him in a semi-lotus pose, her eyes half closed, her spine straight like a temple pillar. Ishaan mirrored her, unsure of what to expect. No instructions were given.

The silence settled, thick and intentional. And then, she began to breathe—not with noise or strain, but in rhythmic waves that seemed to rock the space between them.

Slowly, Ishaan joined. And for the first time in years, he wasn’t breathing alone.

Their breath mingled, met, flowed. The space between them disappeared. He felt his past selves—moon-dweller, wandering student, silent lover—melting into just a man sitting before a woman.

She opened her eyes then and softly placed her palm near his heart—not touching, just hovering.

“You’re not far,” she said gently. “You’re just... elsewhere.”

He blinked, tears rising. “I thought I had lost the doorway.”

“No. You just stopped knocking.”

The days that followed were a rediscovery of love not as romance, but as re-alignment. Tantra wasn’t something they “did”—it was a presence that began living in their home. There were no rituals laid down in manuals, but spontaneous energy exchanges—a touch, a gaze, a shared silence that thickened into stillness.

One morning, as they both sat in padmasana facing the window with the sun rising through misty deodars, Ishaan whispered,

"I used to see Myra so vividly during my early meditation days at Lunar University. The moon made her into a goddess, and my guru used to appear with her—like the moon conjured both divine and desire in one breath."

Vedika listened, eyes closed.

He continued, "But she was never just a woman to me. She was... essence. Beyond shape. She disappeared like dawn into sunlight after we married. But I never hated her for it."

Vedika opened her eyes. "You don't have to bury her. We women can hold space for things your mind thinks it must erase. She's part of your sacred fire. And perhaps... in some way, she brought you closer to me."

He touched her hand. "That's why I never spoke of her. Not even to my cousin Ranjana. Not to Gagan. Not even to Mr.Dutt when he probed kindly during his rare visits."

She smiled with an amused raise of her eyebrow. "Not even to Vinod?"

"Vinod would've turned it into a mathematical theory," he chuckled.

The journey into tantric rediscovery took them deeper—not just into each other, but into themselves. One evening, Vedika recalled a family tale.

"Did you know, in my lineage it's believed that true tantra is the art of becoming transparent to the divine? Not projecting desire, nor suppressing it—but becoming so pure that even your longing is a prayer."

"That sounds like Myra," Ishaan whispered.

"Or like you," Vedika countered.

There was one evening, particularly unforgettable. Rain was pouring outside, steady and rhythmic. They had done a light meditation, and Vedika brought out a bowl of kesar-milk. They sat in silence sipping it when she said,

"Tantra isn't about rising above the body, Ishaan. It's about making even the body divine."

He nodded. "On the moon, I felt detached. On Earth, I feel anchored. But with you, I feel... reconnected." Ishaan added, Tantra is already extraordinary... but what truly elevates it is the subtle presence and blessings of the Pitras who reside here in pitruloka in subtle form.

She leaned into him, forehead against his. "That's the whole path, isn't it? Not to escape the world, but to light it up. From inside."

The days melted into a rhythm—practical, sacred, silly, silent. Ishaan would sometimes cook too much daal; Vedika would sometimes burn the incense stick. But all of it was part of the cosmic play. Their tantra wasn't a grand ritual. It was two people meeting, again and again, without past, without future, only present.

And when Diya asked innocently one day, "Papa, why do you both smile so much these days?", Ishaan kissed her forehead and whispered, "Because love has many chapters, and we just opened a new one."

Ishaan paused reading.

The breeze was cooler now. The bells had stopped. Only bird songs remained, stitching the sky with invisible threads. The cedar shadows had stretched further along the terrace. A light cloud passed over the sun, scattering a golden glow.

He closed the book for a moment and whispered to the wind,
"Thank you, Vedika. You brought me back."

The next chapter waited patiently.

But for now, he sat still, the memory warm, the moment sacred.

Chapter 18: The Return of the Guru

At fifty-two, Ishaan Sharma sat wrapped in a warm woollen shawl, the late afternoon sun spilling golden light over his verandah. Nestled within the folds of the hills, his wooden home overlooked terraced pines and meandering clouds. It was here, after an early retirement, that he had chosen to spend his quieter years—closer to silence, and closer to the Self.

A cup of steaming tulsi chai by his side, he opened his favorite book once again—the one he had authored decades ago, *She Who Became My Guru*. With practiced fingers, he turned the worn pages until he reached Chapter 18: The Return of the Guru.

As his eyes glided over the title, the real world faded. Time folded inwards. The chapter wasn't just being read. It was being lived. Every memory became as vivid and alive as if the present had agreed to merge with the past.

After the Tantra-infused reconnection with the divine feminine in the previous spiral of time, Ishaan found himself subtly rereading forgotten threads of childhood, teenage dreams, and ancestral warmth. Back on Earth with his family aboard their metallic blue space car, he was granted urgent lunar leaves—partly because of the marriage invitation, but mostly because the inner pulse of the soul often chose peculiar timings for its return journeys.

The reunion at Govind's ancestral home in Himachal was nothing short of magical. The crisp air, the scent of deodars, and the vivid hustle of marriage rituals—it all came together like a painting infused with laughter.

The celebrations were vibrant. Lanterns floated like starlit jellyfish above the courtyard. Laughter bounced between stone walls that had seen five generations grow, marry, and pass. Amidst the bhangra beats and teasing aunts, Ishaan noticed something deep—no Myra. She wasn't part of this celebration, and yet her essence hung in the air like a forgotten fragrance. Perhaps that's what gave the evening its hushed undertone of mysticism.

At the function, Ishaan met Ranjana, his cousin sister, who had arrived separately with some of his old Pine Crest School classmates. Their presence stirred a bubbling joy within him.

"Ishaan! Remember the time we convinced Mr. Dutt that the science lab skeleton had started blinking?" Vinod laughed, clapping Ishaan on the back.

"Oh, and Gagan spilled blue ink all over Principal ma'am's white sari. Accidentally, of course," Anjali chimed in.

They laughed so hard their eyes watered. Ranjana, standing beside Ishaan, nodded with affection. "Those were golden days. Who would've thought our paths would circle back like this?"

Later, Ishaan and Ranjana took a slow walk through the orchard behind the house, the ground strewn with early apples.

"Do you remember Govind's mischief?" Ranjana asked, her eyes twinkling.

"How can I forget?" Ishaan replied with a grin. "He was like little Krishna, incarnated in full naughtiness."

They began recounting episodes: how Govind once stole laddoos from the prasadthali and cleverly blamed a dog. Or when he put alarm clocks in every cupboard of their home just to create 'a musical morning.' And how, during a family havan, he had mischievously added color powder into the smoke to create 'divine rainbow blessings.'

They burst into laughter. Even the trees seemed to smile. Ranjana while holding her belly grinned, "too much laughter makes one forget to breathe!" Ishaan chuckled. "Just like Govind's mischief used to do—remember how he replaced nanaji's walking stick with a sugarcane pole?" "Oh yes!" Ranjana laughed, covering her mouth. "And when he added glue to his teacher's chalk on result day!"

Both laughed until their sides ached, walking slowly under a velvet sky where constellations formed their own mandalas.

As the ceremony buzzed in the background, Ishaan sat down under a flowering pear tree. A sudden wave of stillness took over. Myra's absence was profound, yet strangely peaceful. The earth hummed with memory.

It was then, while watching an old lamp flickering in the garden temple, that it happened.

A wave of energy rose within him, like a returning tide. It began in the spine and unfurled upward like a serpent of light. But this time, unlike before, it didn't crash over him. It was gentle. Familiar. Guided by love.

Suddenly, the image of his grandfather, the original Guru, returned with startling clarity.

The voice was inner, yet audible:

"Reading the Puranas is far more rewarding than watching them. For when you read, your mind paints its own pictures—pictures born from your own subconscious. And these dissolve it lovingly. But when you watch them on screens, you are caged in someone else's imagination, which might not align with your inner samskaras. It adds new layers rather than dissolving the old." The words struck him like truth wrapped in poetry. He remembered how his grandfather, in his simple dhoti and sacred thread, would sit under the neem tree and read out loud from the Bhagavatam, smiling gently at the clouds. This was not the first time Ishaan had felt his energy rise. But it was only the second time it had completed the circle—reaching not just to the ajna chakra, but flowering in the heart. The sensation was different now. He was no longer chasing realization. It had arrived like a homecoming.

He folded his hands inwardly.

"Thank you, Dadaji," he whispered.

There was no mystical thunder, no halo of divine light. Only an overwhelming sweetness, like a flute playing in the silence.

A few feet away, Vedika approached with a cup of coffee. She sat beside him quietly, watching the light play on his face.

"You look... somewhere else," she said gently.

"I'm exactly where I belong," he replied.

She smiled. "That's all I've ever wanted for you."

There was a pause, warm and weightless.

Then she asked, softly, "But tell me... what brought you here?"

Ishaan glanced at the sky, then turned to her. "This awakening happened because we remembered something from the past."

Vedika tilted her head. "You mean a memory?"

He nodded slowly. "Yes. Awakening is nothing other but deeply remembering something—or someone."

She watched him, the depth in his eyes like still water. "And then?"

"When the intensity of that remembrance crosses a certain threshold," he said, "it transforms into self-realisation."

Vedika looked away, as if the words had opened something within her. "So... we don't really become something new. We remember who we've always been."

He gave a quiet smile. "Exactly."

Someone called Vedika to the kitchen. She left quietly, her absence leaving behind a hush that hung in the air. The hollow she left was soon filled as Ranjana and Gagan joined Ishaan. Thereafter, they all stepped onto the rooftop to enjoy the calm evening breeze, the fading light over the hills, and the peaceful silence that settled all around. They both settled beside him with an ease born of old familiarity.

Together, they watched as dusk gently folded into night. The city lights began to twinkle in the distance, but none of them seemed to notice. Ishaan leaned back on his elbows, eyes lost in the sky.

Ranjana broke the silence. "You know, I've been thinking... love really isn't bound by form, is it?"

Ishaan smiled faintly. "Not at all. Love is love. When truly practiced, it can mix with any kind of physical object or being, regardless of its nature, form, or even gender."

Gagan raised an eyebrow. "Like how your love for Govind shifted onto Myra?"

Ishaan nodded. "Exactly. And if that could happen—if love could move from Govind to Myra—then why couldn't it move to an imaginary Krishna as well?"

Ranjana looked intrigued. "You mean Krishna as in... a divine figure?"

Ishaan turned to her. "Yes. The strength of my love for Govind was actually reinforced through Krishna. His stories were everywhere in my home growing up—told daily, alive in every corner. And Govind... he reminded me of Krishna, especially the child and boy forms."

Gagan leaned forward. "That's an interesting connection. Are you saying the love was shaped by that divine narrative?"

Ishaan smiled. "In a way, yes. The childhood of any being—human or divine—is strikingly similar. Only in God's case, we add divinity, purity, and a layer of mysticism to make it more contemplative, more meditative. Because God, unlike humans, lacks a physical form. So we shape stories to feel that presence."

Ranjana nodded slowly. "And when that refined kind of love finds a real human being..."

Ishaan finished her thought, "...it becomes super-contemplative. Because now, that human also brings a physical form—something divine stories never had. That makes it even more powerful."

Gagan sat back, thoughtful. "So, love isn't really shifting. It's flowing—into the forms that allow it to grow, deepen, and reflect."

Ishaan's eyes softened. "Yes. Love doesn't leave. It just takes new shapes."

Later that night, with the moon rising in the clear sky and the hills echoing with the distant sound of wedding drums, Ishaan stood on the terrace alone. The stars blinked knowingly. The guru hadn't returned as a person—but as presence.

As the chapter ended within the pages of his book, so too did Ishaan return from the past.

He shut the book slowly, savoring the final sentence like a warm embrace. The verandah was now bathed in twilight. In the valley below, the mist danced like spirit-beings, and a nightjar called from the forest.

"I'm still that boy," he whispered to himself. "Only... a little more whole."

And so the day faded gently into night, as Ishaan rose, not older, but newer than ever before.

Chapter 19: Dreams, Myra, and Mystery

By the time Ishaan reached Chapter Nineteen of She Who Became My Guru, the afternoon sun had begun its quiet descent behind the cedar-clad ridges of his Himalayan retreat. A thin veil of cloud floated lazily across the peaks, diffusing light like an old memory—neither too bright, nor too dim. He sat cross-legged on the floor by the open bay window, a mild breeze carrying the scent of pine and distant rain. The pages of his own book fluttered gently on the table, as if eager to remind him—this isn’t over yet.

He turned to the chapter titled Dreams, Myra, and Mystery.

And just like that, it began happening again.

Back then, he never saw it coming. The awakening. The spiral. The slow but powerful inward turn of his senses.

But it didn’t begin with scriptures or chants. It began with **her**.

Not in the ashram. Not during a retreat. But in the cluttered corridors of Pine Crest School—amid exam stress, adolescent jokes, and half-said goodbyes.

Her name was **Myra**.

Everyone saw her as just another brilliant, quirky, vibrant schoolmate with that odd yin-yang mix—wild laughter and sudden silences. But to him, she had always been something else. Something unnameable. He could never quite look at her directly for long. Something stirred. Something too vast for a teenage mind to hold.

She made him restless—but not in the way of infatuation. It was more like standing near a forgotten temple: you don’t know why your chest tightens, but you feel something ancient awakening.

Back then, he called it attraction.

Now, reading his own words, older and inwardly calmer, he knew it was initiation.

The dreams started the same year his curiosity toward yoga and mysticism bloomed. He would see her—not as a classmate—but as light. Sometimes

sitting beneath a tree reading ancient texts. Sometimes walking silently through ruins. And sometimes, simply staring at him with an unsettling stillness that made everything else blur.

He once told Gagan about a dream, casually.

Gagan had chuckled, "Oye, she's your dream girl in the literal sense now!" But Anjali—Myra's observant friend—had overheard and said something cryptic:
"Not all dreams come from sleep. Some come to wake you up."

What confused him most was that the pull toward her never felt impure. His growing interest in Kundalini, in chakras, in breathwork—somehow, she kept surfacing in the background of all of it.

Like she was threaded through the sadhana itself.

The tipping point came one dusky evening in the school library. He was reading a translated copy of the Devi Bhagavatam, and as if scripted by fate, Myra walked in and sat at the adjacent table. For a moment, he forgot the book entirely. Then she asked, without lifting her eyes from her notes:
"Do you think all energy is feminine?"

He froze. "Why do you ask?"

She shrugged. "Just curious. Shiva sits still. Shakti moves."

That line haunted him for weeks.

At that age, he didn't yet understand how lust could be lifted, not denied. He only knew that trying to suppress what he felt led to tension, and indulging it dulled his clarity. It was **Govindbhaiya**—his elder cousin, silent seeker, and mystic-in-hiding—who gave him the key.

"Energy doesn't ask questions," Govind had said one afternoon while flipping hot parathas. "It just moves. Where you let it move is your sadhana."

Those words were the silent switch.

The chaos he felt—so easily mistaken for teenage hormones—was quietly turned inward. The same pulse that stirred when Myra looked at him now found refuge in dhyana. He began using her as a dhyana-mudra without even knowing the term. Not her form, but her presence. Her mystery. Her silence. Mr.Dutt, their unconventional teacher, had once noticed Ishaan unusually silent in class.

"You look like you're meditating, Sharma."

"Maybe I am, sir."

To which Mr.Dutt had only smiled and whispered, "Good. But meditate upward."

In one of his deepest dreams, years later, Myra appeared again—older this time. Not aged, but ageless. She stood beneath a tree made of light, its leaves shimmering like miniature galaxies. In the dream, he was fully conscious, aware he was dreaming, and yet unable to wake. It was not sleep—it was a journey. "Myra?" he had asked, voice quivering.

"No," she answered softly. "Not anymore."

"Then... who?"

"I am what you made of me."

Her eyes held a mother's compassion, a friend's mirth, and a Guru's power.

"You carved me with longing," she continued. "Then sculpted me through silence. Now let me dissolve into stillness."

He reached for her hand, but she melted into light.

That dream marked a turning point.

From that day, he never saw Myra as a lost love. He saw her as the force that first cracked open his inner world. The fire that didn't burn—but transformed. She had never truly been a girl. She had been the Shakti principle in disguise—clever enough to wear adolescent charm, but wise enough to leave when the work was done.

She was the movement that led him to stillness.

He still remembered how difficult it had been to explain this to **Vedika**, his wife. Not because she wouldn't understand—but because he feared she might.

But Vedika had only smiled, serene as ever, and said:

"If she opened your path, then I'm grateful to her. We all have someone who breaks us open."

He had stood quietly, humbled by the depth of her presence. She wasn't jealous. She was aware.

"Besides," Vedika had added, "if she was your Guru, she chose well when she stepped away."

Now, at 52, surrounded by the scent of cedarwood and the songs of whistling thrushes, Ishaan closed his eyes and relived it all—not as memory, but as living now. He had long stopped distinguishing the outer world from the inner one. Everything was part of the same eternal unfolding.

He thought of **Vinod**, his genius classmate, who once joked that Ishaan was "writing devotional poetry disguised as teenage love letters."

He thought of **Ranjanadidi**, who called Myra "your spiritual vitamin."

He thought of **Anjali**, who knew far more than she ever said, and whose quiet nods had once reassured him more than any words could.

Even now, even after years of advanced yogic states, silent retreats, and mystical highs, that first flame—the tender confusion of seeing Myra for what she really was—remained the most sacred moment.

The gateway.

The adi-darshan.

As the chapter drew to a close, the clouds parted, and golden light poured onto the hilltop like prasad. Ishaan rose, book in hand, and stepped out into the open. The valley stretched endlessly before him, soaked in silence and light.

He stood there, breathing slowly, the book held close to his chest.

"Myra," he whispered—not as a name, but as a mantra.

A bird took flight.

The wind brushed his face like a blessing.

And in the stillness that followed, he didn't feel alone.

He felt guided.

Always guided.

By her, and through her, and beyond her.

By that which she had always pointed toward—the One who has no name, no form, yet wears every face we've ever loved.

Chapter 20: The Pit Between Two Loves

The morning air in Himachal carried a mountain stillness—an emptiness so complete it almost hummed. Ishaan sat on his pinewood verandah, legs folded, the old book *She Who Became My Guru* resting on his lap. He had turned to Chapter 20 again, not out of nostalgia, but because it always asked something of him. This chapter wasn't ink on paper. It was memory.

His eyes traced the opening line: "She brought you here," Vedika had said, "but I'll walk you further."

And in an instant, the stillness broke, as if time itself inhaled.

He had already told her once—long ago, on that impossible moonlit night after his awakening. A night that had felt like the afterglow of Samadhi, weightless and strangely natural. It had come up then, not as confession, but as a necessity. Now, while reading the chapter again at 52, he found himself reliving that same moment in full force, as if it were happening again in real-time.

On the moon, where dreams met dimensions, he had looked at Vedika's calm, starlit face and said:

"I once loved someone... with a devotion that bordered on madness. Not just her—before her, there was him. My cousin. Govind. He was Krishna to me. Or maybe... Krishna had always been him."

Vedika hadn't flinched. He remembered how she'd merely nodded, her eyes like wells of cosmic understanding.

"So your devotion was pre-shaped," she had replied. "Sculpted in love before it ever met a form."

Even now, reading it again, Ishaan could feel that line break something open in him—something beautiful and necessary.

That memory was what birthed this chapter.

When Ishaan had first met Govind, they were just boys. But Govind's wild laughter, his knack for vanishing sweets and sneaking into orchards, his untamed spirit—it all mirrored the stories of Krishna that echoed through their home. Govind, with his charm and mischief, was the living, breathing echo of the child-form Krishna. The love Ishaan developed for him wasn't ordinary affection—it was bhakti in its purest seed form. A love that knew no shame, no rules, no boundary.

And in that divine mischief was concealed a spiritual safeguard:

"Love is love. If it is kept in practice, it can mix with any type of physical object irrespective of its nature, form, gender."

Govind was his first Krishna. Not metaphorically—but experientially. The boyish play, the laughter, the disappearing laddoos, the gleam in the eyes that spoke of something far more ancient than childhood. It all forged a subconscious channel—through which Ishaan's later love would pass, uncorrupted.

Because Krishna was there all along.

Later, when Myra appeared like a sunrise in human form, it wasn't that Ishaan's heart was shaken anew—it was that an old tune found a new instrument. The bhava was familiar. The fragrance, known. She reminded him not just of Krishna—but also of Govind, as if life was gently echoing a deeper pattern.

The love shifted again, just as it had from Govind to Krishna and now to her. And still—**love remained the same.**

Vedika had summarized it perfectly that night on the moon, her voice filled with a quiet gravity:

"You loved Govind through Krishna. You loved Myra through Govind. The thread was always divine. Just we didn't see it clearly until now."

Reading now, Ishaan came to the line he had written years ago in this very chapter:

"Those who love God first cannot misuse love later. They cannot fall—because they have already risen."

It made him chuckle softly. It was so true, so frighteningly simple. Because Krishna, that imagined and intangible flame of his childhood, had refined his love. Made it powerful yet tender. **That purity had removed impurities like lust, attachment, craving, and misbehavior.**

So when Ishaan finally encountered physical love again, it didn't drag him down. It lifted him further.

There was no pit between two loves. There was a polished bridge.

On that moon, Vedika had said one more thing—he recalled it now as if she whispered it in the rustle of pine leaves around him.

"When love to Krishna becomes dhyanachitra," she had explained, "it must be extraordinarily strong—because it lacks physical form. You have to keep recreating it every moment in your heart. That's what makes it subtle, sharp, and sacred."

"And then," she had smiled, "if such love ever finds a real person—a body, a face, a voice—it explodes into something nearly divine. That's what happened with you and Myra."

He had nodded silently. "And with you, Vedika, that energy found a direction."

She had tilted her head, amused. "You were always walking upward. I just gave you a torch."

The chapter then veered gently into remembrance of Govind's boyhood again. How he would splash into puddles right after a storm, not caring about being scolded. How he once fed the temple cow mango pickle, claiming she liked sour. How he broke his arm climbing a jamun tree to impress Ranjana, then told everyone he fell from heaven.

All so Krishna-like. Ishaan's grandmother used to say, "Every boy is Krishna before he becomes a man. Some never stop being him."

And that was true for Govind. In fact, it was true for every child. For every divine love.

"Actually, the childhood of everyone is similar whether it is human or god," the chapter read, **"only divinity, purity and mysticism is added to love that is to god."**

Now Ishaan's fingers trembled slightly on the book's edge—not from weakness, but from fullness.

This wasn't a story.

This was a pattern. A cosmic intelligence weaving itself through the threads of his life—from Govind to Krishna to Myra to Vedika.

Each one carried him forward, never backward.

Because the moment love doesn't possess, it transforms.

The moment it doesn't pull down, it lifts up.

The moment it doesn't crave, it awakens.

The wind whispered through the pines again, and Ishaan looked up from the page.

Vedika was walking along the path below, collecting pine cones in her shawl like a mountain girl from a folktale. She paused, looked up at him, and smiled.

He didn't say a word. Just nodded.

The same way he had nodded years ago on the moon, after repeating everything he'd once disclosed.

The same way one acknowledges not a woman, but a guiding light.

He placed the book on his chest and leaned back.

There was no pit. There never was.

Just a sacred hollow where love echoed back as God.

Chapter 21: Father, Guru, Self

Ishaan reached the twenty-first chapter while slowly turning the pages of his handwritten book, *She Who Became My Guru*, the paper still carrying faint scents of sandalwood from his earlier morning rituals. Outside his hill home, pine trees whispered in the breeze, and the snow-capped peaks shimmered like sages in silent meditation. The fireplace beside him crackled gently, as if eager to accompany him on this deep inward journey.

The chapter opened like the rising of the moon: gentle, silent, inevitable.

It had been days since that overwhelming night on the moon when Vedika had listened to Ishaan's soul bare itself. And now, sitting at his modest desk in the lunar observatory—earthlight filtering softly through crystalline windows—he began writing, not for the world, but for himself. Yet he knew someone would read it. Perhaps not today, not tomorrow, but one day—when the need to know overtook the fear of knowing.

Ishaan began not with events but with reflections. "How strange," he murmured to himself, "that in childhood, the first face of love I knew was Govind's... and yet, beneath it, was Krishna's presence. Now I see, beneath both, stood another—silent, unwavering—the soul of Dadaji."

His fingers moved like a calligrapher's, slow yet deliberate, as if decoding inner etchings.

He recalled the mornings of his childhood when Dadaji sat on the veranda, reading ancient scriptures, surrounded by silence so thick it felt like a protective aura. "Back then," Ishaan thought, "I only saw an old man wrapped in wool. But now I realize he wasn't reading stories—he was living them."

During those years, Govind had been the storm, Krishna the rain, but Dadaji—he was the unchanging sky.

Ishaan's pen danced across the page as he began to draw lines between his experiences: love for Govind, his boyish mischiefs echoing Krishna's leelas, and now, this strange fusion of divine love that shielded him from spiritual downfall. Vedika had once said, her voice almost a prayer, "When you truly love God, your love becomes immune to impurity. It sheds its skin, like a snake shedding desire, until only its essence remains."

He had smiled at that, but now he understood.

One evening, shortly after the moon mission had given them weeks of otherworldly contemplation, Vedika had asked him while sipping a rare tulsi brew, "Why does your love survive, Ishaan? Even after the storms?"

And he had responded, almost unknowingly, "Because I first loved the divine in a human... and then I saw the divine had always been there."

He chuckled, remembering how she had tilted her head with mock irritation. "So, is that your secret equation? God plus Human equals Immunity to Madness?"

They had both laughed, but within that laughter was something weightless, ancient.

Ishaan kept writing.

He wrote about Govind's childhood: how he would climb mango trees and chant self-made couplets about school teachers, how he mimicked Krishna's butter-stealing antics and turned them into biscuit raids. How, every night, Ishaan would watch him act out scenes from BalLeela, and how those divine stories—heard daily in their home—had slowly seeped into the soil of his heart.

He now understood: his love for Govind was never merely for Govind. It was a seed watered daily by Krishna's mythology, unknowingly fertilized by Dadaji's spiritual gravity. "Childhood," he wrote, "is not so different, whether human or divine. Only the lens we place on it—purity, myth, mystery—shifts its meaning."

He closed his eyes, remembering.

It was the day after their celestial confession. Vedika had asked him to sit beside the moon lake, where reflections looked clearer than the objects themselves.

"You know," she began softly, "your love for Krishna didn't shift to Myra by accident. It flowed like a river into her because love, if genuine, doesn't end—it only changes the vessel."

Ishaan had been silent.

She added, "It's the same love. The same current. Only, with Myra, you had a face to hold. With Krishna, you had to build that face from longing. And when that longing found a form—Myra—it intensified."

Ishaan remembered whispering, "But what about the danger? Doesn't strong love corrupt?"

Vedika shook her head. "Only when it's not purified by its source. The love that begins in devotion—even if diverted—carries a fragrance that cannot rot. And if one enters physical love with a refined heart, then even passion becomes a teacher, not a trap."

And that had been a turning point.

In that moment, something in Ishaan shifted. He looked at the moon and realized it was no longer cold—it was a mirror. The pit between two loves wasn't a fall—it was a bridge.

He continued writing.

Medical science had given him terms: mirror neurons, oxytocin, emotional transference. Puranic wisdom gave him metaphors. But lunar research had given him the experience—the inarguable knowing—that love itself was a medium of awakening.

He remembered Mr.Dutt's voice, from the old Pine Crest classroom, thundering about "energy never dying." How strange that those physics lectures now echoed in his spiritual life. Myra, Anjali, even Gagan—each had been frequencies in his inner spectrum. Each had offered reflections, distortions, or amplifications.

And yet, one figure had never left the background: Dadaji.

He remembered the day he found the handwritten letter, locked in Dadaji's wooden trunk. A letter that wasn't addressed to anyone but was dated three months before Ishaan's birth.

It read:

"The one who will carry forward my fire will not be taught—it will awaken in him. May he one day find the moon in his mind, the sun in his chest, and the stars in his breath."

Ishaan stared at that letter for hours. It wasn't a prophecy. It was a transmission.

Later, while speaking to Vinod during a late-night tea session back on Earth, Ishaan had casually brought it up. Vinod had sipped his chai and said, "Then your Dadaji wasn't just a grandfather, Ishaan. He was your seed memory. The beginning of your spiral."

The phrase struck him like lightning.

Dadaji hadn't raised him. He had implanted something.

"Father, Guru, Self," Ishaan wrote in bold across the next page. "In the true journey, they are not separate. The guru is born as father, the self is born as disciple. One grows into the other."

He remembered Ranjana once saying, "It's funny how your spiritual side never needed explanation. Like it came coded."

It had. And that code was Dadaji.

The chapter moved forward, not in time, but in depth.

He described how the mind's idea of God always lacks form, and how strong love helps conjure that form with such clarity that it becomes real. "That's why devotion to an unseen divine requires stronger love than to a visible human," he noted. "It's like painting without canvas. Only the lover's gaze creates the shape."

And when that divine love finds a human host—Myra, Govind, Vedika—it becomes stronger than either could hold alone. Like a dhyanachitra—those focused inner images yogis meditate upon—it gets forged not only from faith, but from memory, longing, and the fire of the search.

As Ishaan finished the final lines of the chapter, snow had started to fall gently outside his window. A slow, graceful dance. The same dance he had seen on the moon—tiny flakes of cosmic dust drifting silently.

He leaned back.

The chapter had ended, but it felt like a beginning.

Outside, the hills were turning white again, wrapping the earth in a blanket of stillness. From his hilltop retreat, Ishaan watched the horizon melt into the mist, feeling the presence of his grandfather, his guru, his self—all as one breath in his chest.

He closed the book and whispered to the fireplace, “Dadaji... I see you now.”

The fire answered not with sound, but with warmth.

Chapter 22: Awakening Beyond Duality

The sun had just begun to dip behind the horizon, splashing the distant Dhauladhars with strokes of gold and soft lavender. Ishaan Sharma, now fifty-two, sat in his quiet wooden study atop the misty slopes of his hill home. A fragrant breeze carried the scent of pine needles through the open window, rustling the curtains like a whisper from the past. His fingers, now marked with time's wisdom, turned the page of his book *She Who Became My Guru*, landing on Chapter 22.

As his eyes traced the title—Awakening Beyond Duality—the present began to dissolve. What remained was a subtle, silent descent into memory. In a blink, he was no longer an aging man in a hillside home, but the younger Ishaan once more, standing barefoot under a pale lunar sky.

The air around him was still, sacred, as if holding its breath. Myra stood before him, the fire of divine curiosity in her eyes, radiant and calm, like the moon herself. Beside her, Vedika—grounded, loving, and equally luminous—gazed at him with a silent knowing. Behind them, like the flickering outline of a fading campfire, stood his grandfather, smiling without words, like a log glowing even after the flames had retreated.

For a moment, Ishaan's breath caught. Not out of fear or awe, but because there was nothing left to separate him from them. They were not memories. They were truths. Archetypes of his journey—the spark, the sustainer, and the silent witness.

He bowed. Not in ritual, but in recognition.

"I mistook love for a distraction once," he whispered, eyes closed.

Vedika chuckled softly, her presence like earth under his feet. "And I mistook stillness for surrender."

Myra added gently, "But it was neither. Love was the bridge, Ishaan—not the detour."

He opened his eyes, and in them, something shifted. The duality that had split him between fire and soil, passion and peace, longing and loyalty—it all dissolved. He had tried to pick sides between heaven and earth, spirit and form, Guru and companion. But now, he saw. They were all faces of the One.

His voice came, light yet steady, like a mountain spring: "So that's what grandfather meant when he said—'Between the rising breath and the falling thought lies the path to who you really are.'"

The old man behind them, who had once told him tales of Krishna and Shiva beside the fireplace, laughed in the background. "You thought I spoke of riddles, boy. But what is a riddle if not a hug in disguise—pulling you closer to truth with every turn?"

Ishaan laughed too, but tears ran down his cheeks. Not of sorrow, but of dissolving.

He remembered Gagan's laughter echoing across Pine Crest's football field, the way Ranjana danced during the school function, Vinod's sharp questions in Mr. Dutt's class that always pushed boundaries, and Govind's unspoken warmth in their shared silences. They were all part of this story, this illusion that never really was an illusion—it was a mirror, reflecting his own Self back to him, in fragments until the whole emerged.

He sat now under that lunar sky. The moon hung low like an ancient witness.

"Myra," he said, "you woke up the spark in me. But it was Vedika who taught me how to hold that fire without burning."

"And now?" Vedika asked, her voice barely above the wind.

"I am neither the fire, nor the holder," Ishaan smiled, "I am what remains when both dissolve."

Then came silence—not empty, but brimming.

The wind stilled. Birds hushed. Even the sky seemed to pause.

His breathing slowed.

Then stopped.

Time ceased to drip. Boundaries lost their grip. There was no Ishaan left to observe it. No ‘self’ to report the happening. What was left was being—a vast, clear awareness, unconditioned, unbound, unnamed. This was not an experience. It was the absence of one.

No Myra. No Vedika. No grandfather. No lover. No breath. No body. Just pure, indivisible space. No center. No circumference. This wasn’t samadhi to be felt. It was the falling away of all that ever tried to feel.

For hours—perhaps lifetimes—he remained like that.

When breath finally returned, it was not a return. It was grace.

Eyes blinked open. The moon had shifted. A new night had begun.

He sat up slowly, back under the same sky, but no longer as the one who had entered it. Something fundamental had changed.

He heard laughter nearby—Anjali and Gagan arguing over a mango again, just like school days. Vinod correcting them with a footnote from some ancient scripture. Ranjana humming a forgotten childhood tune. Even Govind, somewhere in the ether, smiling his quiet smile.

He looked at Vedika and Myra once more, and this time, both smiled and merged into light.

Then even light became unnecessary.

Back in the present, in his hill home, the fireplace crackled. Ishaan exhaled slowly and closed the book gently. The shadows in the room danced playfully.

Outside, the Dhauladhars wore their moonlit crown. The stars looked closer than ever.

He stepped out onto the wooden balcony. Wind kissed his cheeks. Pine needles rustled. The owl hooted like an old friend.

No division remained. The Guru, the lover, the self—all were one. And even the One had disappeared.

There was only this. Not describable. Not graspable. But undeniable. Somewhere in the quietest part of his heart, he heard his grandfather's voice once more:

"Boy, when the firewood is burnt, the fire does not mourn. It simply becomes sky."

Ishaan smiled.

And became sky.

Chapter 23: She Who Became My Guru

The pine-scented breeze caressed the veranda of Ishaan's hill home as clouds rolled lazily over the distant valley. With his shawl wrapped gently around his shoulders, Ishaan sat by the wooden window, the familiar creak of the chair beneath him echoing like an old friend. A steaming cup of tulsi chai rested beside his handwritten notes. The air was soaked in the golden hues of dusk.

At fifty-two, Ishaan's beard bore whispers of silver. His gaze softened as he flipped to the final chapter of his book, *She Who Became My Guru*. The title itself glowed from the page, like a prayer whispered through lifetimes. With a gentle breath, he began reading aloud, and the boundary between past and present melted like mist under morning sun.

He was now neither the student nor the seeker. He was the offering.

After that final Samadhi under the moon's grace, where Myra and Vedika had appeared in radiant harmony—spark and sustainer—something subtle but irreversible had shifted within him. For hours his breath had paused, not by will, but by surrender. In the void of Nirvikalpa, he hadn't experienced the universe as a backdrop to himself. He had become that backdrop—space without edges, time without ticking.

But now, Earth called. Humanity called. Even the Moon, which had silently witnessed his transformations, seemed to whisper, "Share."

He had returned to teach, but not to preach. He wrote, not as a master, but as one who had been loved into awakening. His fingers moved like rivers over keyboards and old manuscripts alike, pouring out stories, sutras, mistakes, and miracles. Hundreds of books, scattered like petals across time. Yet, every story led back to her.

Myra.

She had never returned in a worldly sense, and yet, he met her every moment—in the smile of a stranger, the tears of a student, the silence between words. Anjali, her lively friend, once wrote him a letter: "You were her path, Ishaan. But you also walked it because she lit the first lamp."

The Pine Crest School had long renamed its meditation hall as the 'Sharma Consciousness Wing.' Mr. Dutt had passed on, but not before gifting him the old chalk box from his first classroom—a treasure chest more precious than any award.

Govind, now a father of two, once came visiting with his son and confessed, "Ishaan bhaiya, I now understand what you meant when you used to gaze into the void like it was home."

Vinod had become a neurophilosopher, blending quantum biology with Upanishadic insights. "You gave me the courage to study the brain like a temple," he'd once written.

Ranjana, always wise beyond her years, had become a teacher in Dharamshala. Her students often heard stories of a cousin who saw the moon not as a rock, but a reflection of soul.

And Vedika—oh, Vedika. If ever there was a guardian of earthly grace, it was she. Their companionship was not fireworks but candlelight. Steady, warm, illuminating. She had once whispered, during a walk under starfall, "You loved her. You were consumed by her light. But with me, you found the wick."

He had smiled then, remembering how the wick and flame are never at odds.

Ishaan now traveled between Earth and Moon often, teaching not from pedestals but from platforms of shared humanity. He called it **Lunar Earth Sangha**, a school without borders. People gathered, not around him, but around their own yearning. He only nudged.

In one session on the Moon's Sea of Tranquility, a young girl had asked him, "Sir, were you ever afraid?"

He had laughed gently. "I was afraid of love, of surrender, of losing control. Until I realised—fear is devotion misunderstood."

The class had gone silent, not out of reverence, but recognition.

It wasn't just knowledge Ishaan shared—it was vulnerability. His blog, DemystifyingKundalini.com, had become a repository of living experience. Not abstract theories, but diary pages of his awakening—complete with confusions, cravings, breakdowns, and breakthroughs. The post titled 'The Night My Breath Stopped' became the most shared piece across spiritual circles.

He would often write, "Kundalini isn't a force. She's a mirror. The more gently you look, the more fiercely she reflects."

Even when people called him Guruji, he would chuckle. "She was my guru. I'm just someone who listened."

And then there were the letters. Thousands of them. From corners of Earth and outposts on Moon settlements. People asking not how to awaken—but how to stay soft after awakening. He'd reply to each with childlike delight, often ending with, "Don't forget to laugh between breaths. Even the divine giggles."

One morning, while walking beside the old cedar path behind his hill home, Ishaan had paused. A young boy, around sixteen, sat sketching the landscape. Ishaan peeked and saw it was the valley below—with a small figure meditating under the tree.

"That's you," the boy said without turning.

"Looks more peaceful than I usually am," Ishaan smiled.

The boy glanced up. "Maybe because you're not thinking there. Just being."

And just like that, Ishaan bowed.

Not to the boy, not to the drawing, but to the unseen thread that stitched every moment into awakening.

He returned home that day, made a cup of chai, and opened his latest manuscript: *She Who Became My Guru – The Final Word*.

In the final paragraph, he wrote:

"She came like a spark, left like silence. But in between, she burned away every wall I had mistaken for myself. Myra was not just a person. She was the moment life stopped pretending. She didn't teach me Kundalini. She reminded me I was always the serpent and the sky."

As Ishaan closed the book now, at his hill home once more, the evening sunlight broke through the clouds in golden shards. The air smelled of wet pine and old earth. Far down, a flute was being played—its notes rising like incense.

He leaned back, eyes moist but smiling. The story had ended, but the presence had not. In fact, it had just begun.

He whispered into the wind, "Thank you, Myra. Thank you, Vedika. Thank you, Self."

And somewhere, perhaps in the stillness between stars, the silence whispered back.

To be continued in silence...

Recommended books to read-

- 1) Mythological Body : A New Age Physiology Philosophy [SharirvigyanDarshan]
- 2) Organic planet: Autobiography of an eco-loving Yogi - Organic Farming and Rainwater Harvesting fundamentals
- 3) A New Age KundaliniTantra: Autobiography of a Love-Yogi
- 4) Love Story of a Yogi- What Patanjali says
- 5) Blackhole doing Yoga- a matching cosmic story
- 6) Quantum Science and Space Science in Yoga- Where science ends there yoga begins
- 7) SankhyaSansar~ Sankhya, Yoga and Vedanta in an exciting union: Kundalini Awakening as the Prakriti-Purusha marriage festival
- 8) Journey Beyond Earth- A Veterinarian's Life on the Moon